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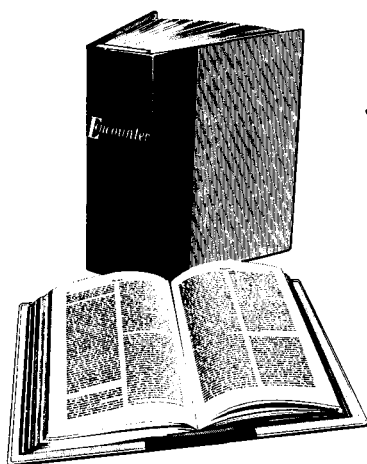
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Iguana Hunting

IN THOSE DAYS we went into the wild to hunt. I had come from the city to stay with my grandparents in Zitilchen for my holidays, and I'd already made some friends. From the low hill that rises south of town, Chidra, the half-breed Mayan, would first go to call for Crispin. When he reached the house, he gave a long whistle and out Crispin came: short, nervous, cunning. Then they came to fetch me. On their way they collected the stones we were to use. They were special stones, almost round, and they rattled in our pockets as we journeyed on.

When they got to our farm Chidra whistled again, and my grandfather would come to the door to let them in. Chidra lived in the wild, and had eaten no food. Not so Crispin. He lived a few streets away and I knew he had had a good breakfast. Both, however, accepted the hot chocolate and rolls my grandmother offered them. While we ate, my grandfather, tall but stooping, joked gravely with us, as was his manner. With Crispin particularly: the old man was very fond of Crispin. He used to call him "don Crispin" and every now and then he'd suggest jobs for him inspired by his diminutive stature and resilient character. He asked him once: "How would you like to join the army when you grow up? Your height would be greatly in your favour." Crispin responded with a dutiful chuckle, revealing the dough between his teeth. In the meantime, Chidra, his mind elsewhere, ate voraciously. My grandfather seldom addressed him. I recall, however, one of his few observations about Chidra. He was talking to Crispin about Padre Garcia's extravagantly mystical sermons: "No", he said, "you're qualified for all sorts of jobs but not that of a priest. You're too much of this world. I would have to think of somebody else for that... Chidra, for

instance." I don't remember Chidra's reaction.

We always set off later than we expected. My grandfather walked with us to the door and saw us off: Chidra, the tallest, still in his elder brother's old shorts; Crispin, the shortest, already in long trousers, both of them provoking all sorts of witticisms as they went.

ALTHOUGH WE ACTUALLY PROPOSED iguana hunting, our expeditions were likely to involve anything. In our forays we spent our time looking for V-shaped branches to make catapults with, or stealing wedges of honeycomb from the hives left out in the fields. Often, as we were walking out of town, we would climb the wall of some orchard to steal oranges or to take a swim in the reservoir. On such occasions I arrived home for dinner clutching my damp underpants in my hand. As soon as my grandmother saw me she'd say: "Have you been swimming in Tomás' reservoir again? The day he finds out you'll be in big trouble and it'll be no use coming to me."

Many were the times we went out to hunt, but it has to be admitted that iguanas were not easy prey. We'd occasionally catch one—and then we'd sell it to a well-known iguana-eater in town—but their natural colours served them all too well. We hunted turtle-doves, lizards, and, on one occasion even an armadillo that Chidra grabbed by the tail. As soon as we were on our own, shooting here and there at the slightest movement in the bushes, Chidra, who in the presence of adults was invariably silent and reserved, could restrain himself no longer. He would tell us the strange occurrences that, according to him, he experienced in his daily walk back home.

These tales always provoked Crispin's anger and contempt. Chidra spoke, for instance, about the afternoon when, returning home from town, he had seen a herd of elephants.

"I yelled out for help but nobody came. . . ."

"That was when you took coffee for the first time in your bloody life. I don't know how many coffees you had, but it drove you crazy", said Crispin, annoyed.

Chidra, however, would not be swayed. He told us that sometimes when he was on his way home towards midnight he could hear somebody hissing insistently: "psst . . . psst . . ." But he never dared turn around to see who it was because he was sure the noises were produced by Xtabay, the evil woman from Mayan mythology. He explained to us that those who turned to see her could not resist her summons since, apart from her feet, her beauty was irresistible. She hid behind the trunk of a ceybo tree and those who responded to her charms woke up next morning with their bodies covered with thorns.

We knew the legend of course. But when Chidra talked about it, he was charged with such conviction that almost every boy in town—Crispin excepted—listened to him enthralled. He told us about a cave in the heart of the wild that led directly to hell. He told us about a wandering Indian, known as Tzintzinito, who was condemned to roam endlessly through the wild.

On one of those mornings Chidra told us that while returning from the camp where his father worked collecting gum, he had seen a naked woman with beautiful long hair bathing in a deep pool. Half joking, half serious, Crispin said:

"Of course you'll tell us she was Xtabay."

"I don't know", answered Chidra. "The woman I saw in the pool had the whitest feet I ever saw. She had long golden hair."

"He's a liar."

"No, I'm not", said Chidra, crossing himself and kissing his thumb.

"When was this?", I asked.

"Yesterday afternoon."

"That's hardly the time Xtabay would come out."

"We'll get him now", said Crispin. "Prove it."

"If you want. But I'd better tell you it's a long way."

"He's afraid", said Crispin.

"Let's go", answered Chidra. "If you're willing, let's go."

CHIDRA KNEW THE AREA well. Not only because he lived in the wild but because of his father's work. Chidra was responsible for bringing him food and other necessities every so often. Once in the wild he was the official guide. We left town. We passed the orchards, we passed the hives, we penetrated the wild. We struggled through the undergrowth, parting bushes and trampling weeds. Chidra, confident of his capabilities, moved his head restlessly like a wild animal on a fresh scent.

There was something uncanny about the whole affair. In Zitilchen days are usually hot and cloudless. That day, however, was humid and grey. When we were in the thickest and most tangled part of the wild we suddenly came across some ancient ruins. Crispin and I were stunned. It was a small abandoned Mayan village but so well kept that it seemed inhabited. We were silent, looking around in awe. After a while Chidra said, "This way. We're nearly there now." Crispin stared at me. I could sense that, like myself, he was afraid as well as fascinated.

Chidra moved forward again, parting the scrub that stood in our way. Nobody thought about the iguanas. Our sole concern was finding out the truth about Chidra's tale. Finally we came to the edge of a large pool. It was a transparent green and its waters were unusually quiet and still. There was nobody around. We found a clearing and hid behind some mangrove trees while we tried to agree what to do. Perhaps there never had been anyone around, except in Chidra's imagination. Crispin wanted to go back to town and repeated constantly that Chidra was a liar. A bloody liar. They had a long argument and were about to come to blows when I saw somebody moving on the other side of the pool. We quickly fell silent, curious to see who it was. A bearded man appeared. We could see him clearly: he was dressed for the bush. He wore glasses and was smoking a pipe. He had a saucepan and as he came to the edge of the pool, he put some soil in the pot and sank it in the water, emptying it some moments later. He was about to leave when a woman, dressed

just like him, appeared, bringing a few more utensils to be washed. We couldn't hear what they were saying.

"There she is", said Chidra slowly.

And it was true, she was just as Chidra had described her: a tall, blonde woman. We saw them for just a few minutes; as soon as they finished their washing they left the pool. We stayed on, still waiting, when Crispin broke our silence. He stood up and said, "Shit! I've got a dreadful itching. What the hell is it?" He lifted up his shirt to show us his back.

"Ticks", said Chidra.

"Blast!" said Crispin as he took off his shirt.

"We must be covered in them too", Chidra said to me, looking at his ankles, scratching himself and standing up to take off his own shirt. I did the same. We undressed ourselves in order to shake off the ticks from our clothes. Chidra even had ticks in his armpits, entangled in the wispy hair. We were covered in them. We were still naked when Chidra began to talk about the woman we had briefly seen, full of the fact that this proved he was no liar. He told us again how, the day before, as he was wandering around the mangroves, he had seen a tall, blonde, white woman bathing in the pool. He described her meticulously. He had seen here in her entirety: feminine, naked, almost divine. He was enraptured. Carried away by Chidra's description, I noticed, at

first with alarm and then with relief, that all three of us were experiencing the very same sensation.

OUR BODIES full of ticks, very tired, we got back to Zitelchen well after dark. We reached my grandfather's farm. I waved goodbye to Crispin and Chidra. My eyelids were heavy. My friends walked down the street. I thought about the blonde woman. I felt the ticks all over my body. Thorns. I was exhausted yet Chidra had a long way to go. Once in the house I went straight to my grandmother.

"I'm covered in ticks", I said. "Help me get rid of them."

"What's a few ticks?", she answered. "They're not black widows. Come on then, off with your clothes and lie down in bed while I warm up some wax."

Feeling her press me all over with the hot wax, I heard her ask:

"For heaven's sake, there's thousands of them! Where on earth have you been?"

"Today we met Xtabay", I answered, satisfied.

*Translated from the Spanish by the author
in collaboration with Andrew C. Jefford*

Alexander Zinoviev

The Radiant Future

Pages from a New Novel

WHERE THE Avenue of Marxism-Leninism meets Cosmonaut Square, a great permanent slogan was erected reading: "Long Live Communism—The Radiant Future of All Mankind!" The slogan was erected at the request of the workers. It was a long time in the building, mainly in winter, when costs are higher. A huge amount of money was poured into it—no less (it is rumoured) than was invested in the whole of our agriculture during the first five-year plan. But today we are very rich, and such expenses are a mere nothing. We have spent even more on the Arabs without breaking ourselves. What we spent on the Arabs was a complete waste, while the Slogan is a source of undoubted benefit.

As might have been expected, the Slogan was of very shoddy construction. The paint began to peel even before the Slogan was put to use. The individual letters became progressively covered in a sort of grey grime, and fell to bits. Therefore the Slogan had to be completely repaired at least three times a year: once for the May Day celebrations, once for the November celebrations, and on every occasion when Moscow entered for the All-Union contest for the model communist city, and the multi-million army of Moscow office workers was driven out on to the streets to clean up the rubbish. As a result the maintenance of the Slogan cost the State several times more than its initial construction. And to judge by the vulgar graffiti which adorn the supports of the letters, the educational effect of the Slogan has not yet achieved even the half of its planned potential.

As the 25th Congress of the CPSU drew near, it was decided to put an end to this outrage. New letters for the Slogan were cast in stainless steel at the Brewery named in honour of the 21st Congress of the CPSU (formerly the Marshal Budyonny Brewery). They were cast by the shock-workers of communist labour in their overtime. The letters were made of bee . . . , forgive me, metal, which had

been specially saved up by the workers in honour of the forthcoming Congress. The letters were mounted on a mighty concrete pedestal. The concrete itself had been saved up by the construction workers of Moscow in honour of the forthcoming Congress. So, on this occasion, not only was nothing spent on the Slogan, there was even a profit, as the builders of the Slogan had saved up more than ten million roubles in honour of the forthcoming Congress. It was decided to spend these carefully garnered resources on the construction of permanent reinforced concrete frames to carry the portraits of the members of the Politburo, thus putting the crowning glory (as the newspapers said) to the splendid architectural ensemble of Cosmonaut Square and the wasteground adjoining it. Defending his idea about the portraits to the Central Committee, the chief city architect asserted frankly that by this means we would be able to conceal the ugliness of the wasteground from the eyes of the foreigners. For after all, we cannot rid ourselves completely of foreigners at the present time!

THE OFFICIAL OPENING of the Slogan was a most solemn occasion. The Avenue was resurfaced. There were many foreign journalists and diplomatic representatives. Countless guests came from the friendly parties of Africa and South America, and there were also delegations from all the countries of the Socialist camp. There were also guests of honour from the lands of capitalism—the Italian actress Sophia Bordobrigida, that personal friend of the Soviet Union the American millionaire Hamson, the farmer Zdrast, the French singer Georges Ivanov, and many others. The ceremony was filmed. To the accompaniment of tempestuous applause from the representatives of the workers who crammed the Avenue, the Square and the wasteground, an Honorary Presidium was

elected consisting of . . . and a telegram of greetings was sent to comrade . . . in person. A major speech was delivered by one of the secretaries of the City Committee of the party, Comrade Tsvetikov, who had recently replaced Yagoditsyn, who had been down-graded to some minor ministry on account of his boundless arrogance. Yagoditsyn had grown so insolent that without any reference to Mitrofan Lukich he had published an article in a magazine which Mitrofan Lukich himself had wanted to publish, and had thus completely discredited himself. So as not to fall flat on his face in the mud, Comrade Tsvetikov had learnt his speech by heart and delivered it almost without error (if we leave aside mistakes in pronunciation). Then it was the turn of the cosmonaut Khabibulin, who said that from out in space Earth looks as it should look under communism: very round, and a kind of pinkish-blue. Then there was a speech from the representative of the freedom-fighting peoples of Africa. Dazzling the whole Square with his flashing, powerful white teeth, he said "Tank yo' very moch!", which threw the workers' representatives into a frenzy. When the applause had finally died down and the well-rehearsed spontaneous slogans had been shouted, Academician Kanareikin mounted the rostrum.

KANAREIKIN IS THE DIRECTOR of our Institute. In its time our Institute was in charge of the building of the Slogan. Members of the Institute delivered more than a hundred lectures on the theory of scientific communism for the builders of the Slogan, which won for them the challenge trophy of the Red Banner of the Regional Committee of the party. That was why Kanareikin was allowed to speak. Otherwise he would in no way have been permitted to mount the rostrum, since he should have gone out of print long ago and cleared the stage for young, talented and literate scientists (and most of all for Vladilen Makarovich Eropkin, a corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences, and son-in-law of Mitrofan Lukich himself). It was a great personal triumph for Kanareikin to be allowed to speak. The newspapers would report it. There would be a rumour that Kanareikin still wielded power. And his removal from office would be further postponed to some unspecified time in the future. And once he had got to the rostrum Kanareikin knew better than anyone else how to exploit his opportunity. He rolled out a penetrating speech which consisted mainly of exclamation marks.

"The malicious enemies of communism and the so-called writer, the anti-Sovietchik Solzhenitsyn, expelled at the demands of the workers beyond the frontiers of our fair Motherland for his slanderous inventions, to find shelter under the wing of the worldwide imperialist bourgeoisie and its lackeys, who. . . . Where was I? Ah, yes! And also that self-styled Academician, the renegade Sakharov, for whom too there is no place in our ranks, who gambles on the long-suffering and humanity of our beloved government and all our people. . . . Just ask yourselves what more could this man want! The government had given him everything! A seat in the Academy. Praise. Awards. But it seems that all this is not enough! Now, what was I saying? Ah! So, they allege that the faith of the Soviet people in communism is on the ebb. What a vile slander!!! If they could only see with what love, with what enthusiasm, the workers of our region have built this magnificent Slogan!!! Completely without payment!!! Is not this an example of the new, communist approach to labour!!!? Does not this bear witness to the fact that, with every year, with every decade, our faith in communism strengthens and widens??!! The freedom-loving peoples of Africa. . . . We have already heard what our comrade here has had to say about that. . . ."

When the foundations of Kanareikin's eloquence had finally, with some difficulty, been turned off, Comrade Tsvetikov yelled all the appropriate "long lives . . ." and "glory to . . ." and cut the ribbon. An avalanche of automobiles, from which could clearly be heard curses directed at the idiots who had organised this spectacle, poured on to the Avenue of Marxism-Leninism, heading directly for the yellow building which housed the Human Sciences Institutes of the Academy of Sciences. Kanareikin tore off in his personal automobile. And I. . . . Why the devil, I ask myself, have I been hanging about here if I haven't been allowed to say a single word! And I'm obliged to drag myself home of public transport, and what's more, with two changes.

One

TWO CHANGES! And I'm not just anyone, I'm the Head of the Department of Theoretical Problems of the Methodology of Scientific Communism, i.e. the Head of a Department of the Institute whose director is still, for the moment, Kanareikin. I am a doctor of philosophy, a professor, a member of the editorial board of our leading philosophical journal, a member of countless Scientific Councils, committees, commis-

sions, societies, the author of six monographs and a hundred articles. My textbook has been translated into all the semi-Western languages—Polish, Bulgarian, Czech, German, Hungarian. It's even about to be translated into Rumanian. It's generally accepted that at the next Academy elections I shall surely become a corresponding member. Even that scum Vaskin from the Higher Party School (HPS) is reconciled to this fact which is so disagreeable for him. Yet—two changes! No one would believe me if I told them. I could take a taxi, of course. But taxis cost a fortune. And prices are soaring every day. And what's more, you have to give the driver a tip, which is extremely humiliating. After all, no one gives us any tips! Again, I could walk. It's not very far. But that would be against my principles. A professor, almost a corresponding member—and walking home! It's ruled out by my rank.

Our institute and the department

OUR INSTITUTE occupies the upper floors of the Yellow House. If you look from the Centre, our Department is in the right-hand wing of the top storey. In the past, when the arrival of communism was expected from day to day, and the fall in prices of one kopeck per annum raised the hopes of even the unbelievers that it would happen any time (well, I'll be damned, they are going to build communism after all), our Institute was very small. In the days of Nikita, when the onset of communism was pushed a little further back into the somewhat ill-defined future of the "present generation", the Institute doubled in size. And after Nikita was toppled, when prices began to rise irresistibly, and the promises of cost-free benefits came to be regarded by all as a mere joke, the Institute quadrupled in size. As a result of events which were well known to all, the sectors dealing with the struggle against anti-communism and revisionism, and with the development of Marxism by the brotherly parties of the West, East, South and North, were first established and then strengthened. And now, our Institute, in terms of the size of its staff (there are more than a hundred graduate students from the non-Russian Republics alone!), has become one of the most powerful scientific organisations in the country. Five hundred quires of 40,000 characters each every year! If you reckon 20 quires to the average book, that means 25 fat volumes a year. Two hundred and fifty books in ten years!

"Now I understand why we've got such a paper

shortage", said Sashka, my son by my first (but, alas, not my last) wife, when he heard about this. "You publish all this shit, and there's no paper left for anything decent."

"You're just naive, Sashka", said Tamurka (that's my present wife, Tamara). "If you only knew how much paper is used for editions of the classics of Marxism and the speeches of our leaders, you wouldn't worry about a triviality like twenty-five books a year."

"But it's just waste paper!"

"Of course it's waste paper. And we plan it ahead as waste paper."

"So why spoil all that paper?" said Lenka, in astonishment. Lenka is my daughter by my second wife (by Tamurka, that is).

"Don't be silly! What about those obligatory minimum print-runs?"

"Well, why not say you are producing big editions, and print fewer? What difference would that make?"

"You'd lose your job for a start, and might even land in jail. Once anyone makes a speech, it's got to be a work of genius. Therefore you must print twenty million. And it's got to be put on sale. And its balance sheet has got to check out."

"Surely no one buys these things?"

"Of course they do. The political education classes. The evening courses in Marxism-Leninism. Libraries, study circles. And look at all the students we've got. They've all got to be able to regurgitate this stuff in their exams."

After a conversation like that, one could easily begin to feel pessimistic about the size of our Institute. And what can one say about the size of our Department?! No more than fifty people altogether. But that does depend on your point of view.

The Department, one could say, is like my own child to me. I have spent almost twenty years of my life on its creation. When I first came to the Institute as a young PhD candidate, the only people working on the methodology of the theory of scientific communism were three cretinous Stalinist yes-men in the Scientific Communism section. This section immediately grew into a Department, but something a long way short of our department. With great difficulty I managed to get rid of one of these imbeciles (catching him red-handed in immoral activity). The other two turned out to be quite bright lads and were easy enough to re-educate. Indeed, one of them went so far to the left that I constantly had to restrain him. I more than once had to tell him straight out that the criticism of Stalin wasn't to be taken seriously, but

he didn't take my advice. Later he got rapped very sharply over the knuckles for his concessions to the Yugoslav revisionists. He was slung out of the Institute on the pretext of some injudicious remark about the Chinese. And then all trace of him disappeared. The rumour was that he'd been put into a psychiatric hospital.

Today there are as many people in our Department as there were in the whole Institute when I first went there. There's even talk about up-grading the Department to an independent institute. But I'm in no hurry. I'm afraid that the same thing might happen to us as happened to the sociologists: as soon as the Department of Sociology inflated itself to eighty people, and then, when it split off from us as an independent institute, to five hundred, there was a massive pogrom against the sociologists. You've got to be careful. The business is far too serious to take unnecessary risks. But on the other hand you mustn't delay too much either. According to some certain unwritten laws of our life, if you want to hang on to what you achieve you've got to keep on pressing forward, i.e. ask for wage rises, plan new publications, get new sections set up, and so on. Otherwise you'll be accused of inaction and backwardness. How can one define the moment when one can say the time has come to make a move?

MANY PEOPLE confuse our Department with the Department of Scientific Communism. But in fact there is a great difference between us. They have gathered together the most sombre figures of our national philosophy. The old ones are the "escaped" Stalinists (that may sound rather comical, since the Stalinists were never victims of anything; the worst thing that happened to them was to be mocked a little in the wall newspaper). The young ones are cynical careerists who are prepared to do anything. And every one of them is completely, crassly ignorant. On the other hand, in our Department we have the brightest and most capable representatives of our philosophy. Stupak, Nikiforov, Novikov, Tormoshilkina, Bulygin, and so on. There isn't a comparable constellation of names in any other philosophy establishment in the Union. It's no mere chance that we are so hated in the Academy of Social Sciences (ASS), in the HPS and in many other places. In comparison with us they feel themselves to be mere provincials and they accuse us of trying to turn Marxist theory into something élitist. But who stops them from writing good books themselves?!

The director of our competitor, the Department of Scientific Communism, is the most disgusting creature in our philosophy—that bitch, Tvarzhinskaya. For more than fifteen years she was the butt of all the sarcasm of the progressive young people of our Institute, but that is now all in the past. For some years now Tvarzhinskaya has been regarded as one of our leading lights! She used to be a close associate of Beria and an active agent of the secret police. Today she regularly travels abroad, and there's never been a single case when she's been refused an entry visa. Even prominent Western sociologists treat her as a colleague.

At home

WHEN I GOT HOME I gave them a detailed account of the opening of the Slogan. My mother-in-law said that it was splendid. Sashka fell about on the divan clutching his sides. Lenka, without batting an eyelid, remarked that she would organise a trip from school to visit this remarkable monument of our culture.

"Nikita promised that communism would come within the lifetime of the present generation", said Sashka. "Who did he mean? His contemporaries, or newborn babies? Anyway, this promise has turned into a dirty joke. Now the date's been pushed back to some vague time in the future. That's easier to cope with. Anyone can always say that communism will come, and that we won't see any more of the scandals and outrages we see today. And for the meantime just hang on, because for the time being we've only reached a lower level. It may be the upper step of the lower level, but it's the lower level just the same."

"Since the letters are cast in stainless steel", said Lenka, "your Slogan will stand there for ever. Shall I tell you a story? The President of the United States asked God when there would be an end to unemployment and inflation. 'After you've gone', God replied. Our General Secretary asked God when communism would be built. 'After I've gone', God replied."

"It's easy enough for you to laugh", I said. "But I've got to earn your bread and butter at this business. Where do you think all this comes from—the apartment, the dacha, holidays, your transistor radios? Maybe we'll be able to buy a car soon."

I need a car. I finally came to this conclusion on my way back from Cosmonaut Square. Close contact with the masses, who are particularly notice-

able in public transport, causes me great irritation, and becomes offensive. Some old cow rammed her elbow in my side and then bawled me out on top of it. And I was so taken aback that I didn't even manage to pay her back in her own coin. Why are so many people unpleasant?

"Your father's right", said Tamurka. "Even a black sheep is worth fleecing. You get to be a corresponding member as quick as you can. I'm fed up with fighting my way through queues. And anyway, there's nothing decent in the shops these days."

"Who are you calling a black sheep?" asked my mother-in-law.

"The Academy of Sciences", said Lenka. "Do you want a bet? They'll give the people who built the Slogan the Lenin Prize. It's as good as done."

"Don't put yourself out on their behalf", said Tamurka, who reckons that I should have been awarded at least a State prize long ago.

"Why shouldn't they get the prize?" said my mother-in-law. "Building something like that isn't just writing some tatty little book. You need talent for that."

The burden of glory

DIMA GUREVICH telephoned. "Congratulations, old man! I have just seen your mug on television. It's true you were only one of a crowd, and you were only there for about a hundredth of a second, but it's something for a start. Now you've got it made—just let them try getting out of electing you."

Then there were calls from Novikov, Nikiforov, Stupak, Korytov, Ivanov, Svetka, and the rest. The whole evening was ruined. The worst of it was that I didn't see myself at all: my mother-in-law was watching ice-hockey on the other channel. But on the whole it's a good thing that I've been seen on television. The news'll be round all Moscow by this evening, and it'll have its effect.

The last to phone was my old friend Anton Zimin. He said that he saw nothing at all funny in the story of the Slogan. Communism had been built here long ago, and it achieved its most classic form under Stalin. Today it had become somewhat less well defined under the influence of enforced contacts with the West. So the words: "Long Live Communism" may be interpreted in the same sense as when we say "Long Live the Soviet People", "Long Live the CPSU", and so on. As far as the second part of the Slogan is concerned, it reflects

an equally real phenomenon: this radiant future does indeed threaten all mankind. And it is no mere chance that the letters are made of steel: once installed, communism is here for ever.

"Certainly I congratulate you", Anton concluded. "But I must warn you: excessive glory gives birth to hatred and envy."

The specific nature of Russian tragedy

THE SPECIAL characteristic of the Russian tragedy", said Anton, "is that first it provokes laughter, then horror, and finally obtuse indifference. I was once swapping recollections with a group of perfectly respectable people. I told them that after Stalin's death the administration of the camp I was in decided to show a bit of liberalism: they let us have a bath. We'd hardly begun to wash ourselves when it turned out there'd been a mistake. They turned the water off and drove us out of the bath-house all wet and naked. And it was thirty below freezing. The thing that struck me at the time was the layer of ice which formed all over my body. And just imagine, my listeners burst out laughing as one man. And later, when I told them that an entire bomber group had flattened a camp holding tens of thousands of people who had allegedly revolted, they were all horrified by the scale of the thing. But they were back to normal within a few minutes. They began to calculate the approximate number of prisoners who had been in camps throughout the whole period of Soviet power. How many of them were guilty, how many innocent. Strangely enough, the figures they got coincided roughly with the ones which Solzhenitsyn produced later."

"So what's the explanation?" Lenka and Sashka demanded, simultaneously.

"There are several", said Anton. "The one I prefer is that the Russian tragedy, and the way in which it is received, lies beyond good and evil, outside the sphere of morality. It is a purely psychological, or indeed physiological, reaction to a terrible fact. At the start of the war a friend and I once saw a shell literally blow the head off a quartermaster colonel, and the colonel just carried on standing there. It was very funny, until we realised the full horror of what had happened. That was a reaction outside morality. It lacked any essentially human basis—of moral protest or of moral revulsion."

"But surely the people whom you told about the

camp must have understood that all that was wicked, terrible, inhuman?"

"They knew it, but they lacked any moral sense of it. For them, as for most of us, such a moral sense does not exist."

"Come now", I said. "Are you really saying that we're all immoral?"

"Wait a minute, papa. Don't interfere", said Lenka. "We're talking about something different."

"What I have in mind", said Anton, "is the fact that there is a mental mechanism which operates even when there are no witnesses, no threat of exposure, whether or not there is any danger of punishment, and so on. For instance, a man may refuse to write a denunciation even if no one could possibly know about it, or refuse to kill a victim even if he himself might be killed because of his refusal. Make a dispassionate, objective inventory of your life. Do you find many instances which would confirm the existence of such a mechanism within yourselves? Or can you name many people among your friends in whom you could put complete trust? Well! . . . You see what I mean."

"What is it that makes us like that?"

"It is because the conditions of our life do not engender any need for moral behaviour and give us no experience of it."

"What are you talking about?" I said indignantly. "Thou shalt not kill! Thou shalt not steal! That is exactly what we and our children are taught!"

"Yes, that is what we are taught. We are also taught how to hold our knives and forks, to pay our telephone bills and our rent on time. The things that used in the past to be the basis of moral behaviour are no longer seen as such. Times have changed. Today, in order to be a moral person it's not enough not to kill, not to steal, not to oppress the weak and to give up one's seat to one's elders. Now there is another set of actions which give people a moral definition."

"And what actions do you regard as moral?"

"That would take a long time to explain. But briefly, they're actions performed by one person towards others without being obliged to by law or custom, which are of no benefit to the person who performs them, and which moreover may even expose him to risk of punishment, but which will be of benefit to the people towards whom they are directed, or at least will cause them no harm. . . . Is that generally clear?"

"There is a contradiction", I said. "How can an action be free of any norms, if it is executed in accordance with moral norms? Are there any such norms?"

"There are no moral norms. If a norm exists, then there is no morality. What people here describe as moral norms have nothing to do with real morality. There is only one factor in morality: that is the capacity to judge whether a particular action is moral or immoral. So there is one 'norm': if you want to be a moral person, be one, i.e. do not commit immoral actions."

"That is a tautology", I said.

"No", said Sashka, "I'm beginning to understand. You can't draw up a classification of moral and immoral actions of themselves. Morality is a particular component of a person which allows that person (often without thinking about it) to perform actions which satisfy some kind of general and unique moral criterion. Is that it?"

"That's it", said Anton.

"For instance, a moral person will never denounce anyone, or betray a friend, under any circumstances."

"And if that causes harm to others, how can one assess his conduct towards them?"

And we began a crazy, disorganised argument that lasted until midnight. Why is it that discussions of this kind never arise in philosophy seminars?

All possible variants

"LET'S DISCUSS the situation soberly", said Anton. "The liberal epoch is over. It is in practice impossible today to publish even the kind of books and articles that were published three years ago. You've obviously felt this yourself. And anyway, it will be almost pointless to do so. They would have no effect. Times have changed, even in the way our work is received. So, what must be done? It's a complex question, and pretty trivial none the less. Here's the dilemma: either we remain within the framework of Marxism, or we leave it altogether. Let's consider the first variant. Here again there are two alternatives: either one obediently executes every instruction from above, and becomes a jackal like Vaskin, or one seeks to innovate. The first alternative is not for you. Even if you wanted to follow that line, you wouldn't be allowed to. It's too late. In *Their book*, you're an innovator. And innovation can be accomplished in two ways as well: either you can revise Marxism, i.e. reconsider its essential formulae as no longer responding to contemporary reality, or you can improve it, i.e. 'develop' it, adapting it to new conditions without departing by an inch from even its most secondary principles. Now, revisionism is

excluded *a priori*. So we are left with improvement. But who is to decide whether you have improved it, or whether you have damaged it? The Vaskins. Who is to decide whether you have deviated or not? The same people. So whether you are kicked out as a revisionist or as an improver who's slightly overdone it and gone off course, that does not depend on you, but on the Vaskins. From my observations the situation at the moment is that They would rather come to terms with revisionists than with improvers, for these latter are genuine competitors. Vaskin too is angling for a corresponding membership. And his claim is no worse than yours. So if he is offered the slightest opportunity of sticking a knife in your back he will do so without a second's hesitation. After all, you improvers have kept the Vaskins in the shadows for almost twenty years. Now their time is about to come. So the better you do your work, the worse for you. And if you do it badly, you'll only be crushed the more thoroughly, since shoddy work is something They're really good at."

"That, on the whole, is true", I said. "Let's hear your second variant."

"Very well", said Anton, "let's consider it. If you leave the framework of Marxism, that opens the following possibilities: (1) you leave the sphere of ideology altogether; (2) you stay within the field of ideology. The former possibility is not for us. We are too old for that. So we are left with the second. Here again there are variants: (1) to criticise Marxism, to fight against it; (2) to be indifferent to it. The situation here is far more complicated than in the cases we have already considered. I will deal with the criticism of Marxism in a moment. I'd like to start with indifference to it. One can deal with ideology while remaining indifferent to Marxism, for example in the spirit of Buddhism or Orthodoxy. That is quite fashionable these days. I won't discuss this course, for, I think that you will agree with me, this sort of ideological activity is not appropriate to present-day conditions. They signify a flight from the most important ideological problems of our time. That way is not for us. That is for burnt-out cases of inferior rank."

"So the question arises, is it possible to be indifferent to Marxism if one is dealing with the most important ideological problems of our times? Alas, personally I am convinced that this in fact is impossible. Marxism, old man, is something very serious indeed. You can't get away from it. Whatever problem you tackle, you will find that it has been considered and in a way resolved by Marxism. And whatever you say about it, in one way or another you will come up against Marxist

tradition, Marxist protest or Marxist approval. Marxism is a great ideology. And if one works in the spirit of the ideological problems of the age, one cannot avoid coming up against it. That is a fact. I think you take my point. So what remains? The struggle? That's where the real snag lies."

"JUST IMAGINE for a moment", Anton continued, "that we were given complete freedom of action, that They said, all right lads, attack Marxism as you think fit! Well, what would happen? Haven't there been masses of such unconstrained critics in the West? Haven't they written a great deal? They have. And they have not been fools. And the books they have written have been intelligent. But what has come of it? Nothing. Marxism today is as invulnerable as it has ever been. Not at all because it is right, or wise. The question does not lie there. The problem is that Marxism, like every other ideology, is not a science. It is scientific in form—the tribute it pays to our era. But it is not a science. People have constantly tried to impose on it the status and appearance of a science. That is to the advantage of those in power: everything that happens is the product of objective laws, and not of their own stupidity. They merely discover the laws, forecast and assist their operation. You'll remember that Stalin said: We must saddle the laws and ride them! And that was no empty phrase: it was very seriously meant. They govern in the name of universal laws, and not on the basis of the rules of large-scale gangsterism. And that is an advantage also to the gigantic army of ideologues: they are scientists, not just some kind of priestlings! And it is an advantage to others as well; it is better to think of oneself as being oppressed by the iron-hard laws of matter than by canny self-seekers, pirates and careerists."

"There are very precise indications of what is a science and what is an ideology. It is a commonplace to say that Marxism satisfies the former criteria, but not the latter. Its alliance with science is an historical peculiarity of Marxism as an ideology. In our age of science and technology and general education it is impossible to get along without that relationship. An ideology which does not claim to be a science, which does not take on an appearance of science, which does not have the means to appear to the broad masses as a science, cannot in our days be an ideology. Marxism, since it is an ideology, and not a science, is invulnerable to scientific criticism. Yet every critique of Marxism

of any significance at all claims to demonstrate its scientific inconsistencies. Criticism of any other kind—for instance that which comes from ideologues of Christianity—is almost imperceptible. And against it, Marxism is armed with a most powerful demagoguery. But say that we manage to refute Marxism. Then another problem arises: suggest something better of your own! And when we try to produce our own alternative, we will be obliged once again to do so according to the laws by which ideologies are fabricated. And in that case we will produce the same thing all over again, with a few trifling modifications. After all, Marxism did arise on the high road of history. And if we build an ideology in the same place, we will end up with something that looks like Marxism. Must we therefore conclude that we are caught in a vicious circle? No. The period which has just passed was interesting in one very important respect: it indicated a way out. Ideology can be defeated by the facts of the reality which it claims to illuminate. In the given case, that means the facts of that social reality which it claims to recognise, foresee, and theorise about.

“The facts drive Marxism into its own trap. That is why Nikita’s speech and Solzhenitsyn’s books dealt a much heavier blow to Marxism than the efforts of all the critics of Marxism through its entire history. This is the path of any real criticism of Marxism—an uncompromising analysis of our society, and the publication of the facts of its existence. And it is the only path. And what is more, it is the only path by which it is possible to develop an ideology more appropriate than Marxism is to man in modern society.”

“So be it”, I said. “But why do you want to produce this ideology? Forget it! Just go ahead with your study of our society, and leave it at that!”

“It’s a question of personal involvement”, said Anton. “There are people who become doctors so that they can cure the human body. My concern is with the human soul. Not the psyche, but the soul—a purely social phenomenon. So I want to do something for this soul. Ideology is a medicine for the soul. But Marxism has nothing to give the soul—it operates as a purely formal ideological mechanism. An interesting subject, by the way, the nature of the ideological mechanism in Soviet society. In this it differs from Christianity. In Christianity there was also an element of coercion. And in Marxism there is a voluntary element. Yet Marxism is hostile to the soul, to spirituality. It is anti-spiritual. I cannot explain this to you in the abstract. But if you take our society and our people in their reality and not in their propaganda abstrac-

tion you will soon see what I mean in every concrete case.”

We had already had several conversations of this kind. But only now did I begin to listen closely to Anton’s words, and to find in them a sense which had hitherto always escaped me.

The conference delegation

THE SCIENTIFIC SECTION of the Central Committee confirmed the membership of the delegation to an international conference. Theirs is the ultimate decision, if you do not count the KGB who at the last moment always hold several people back and slip a few of their own people in in their place (even though almost all the members of the delegation and of the tourist group are essentially in their pocket anyway). But it’s curious all the same, this evolution we’ve seen recently. Indeed the process between the drawing up of the lists for a delegation or a tourist group at source and the confirmation of the final list by the Central Committee reflects or even represents this evolution. At source (in the sections and faculties) they included in the lists everyone who had done productive work over the last few years and who had acquired a decent reputation—i.e. all the leading liberals of our milieu. Then the list moved up to the level of the administrators and the deans, where a number of the decent people were deleted and replaced by rogues and second-raters. Next, at the level of rector and academic departments, a few more of the decent people still left were removed and new names added of even worse mediocrity. At ministerial level, and in the governing bodies of the academies, almost all the surviving people of any worth (all the men of the Sixties) were struck off and their place taken by scum of a kind which in the past would never even have been admitted to local meetings. Finally, the department of science of the Central Committee took the process to its logical conclusion. But I was left in the delegation, much to my shame. But the lads told me that I had been left on the list because there would have been a general furore if I had been excluded. But I know why I was kept on it. Academician Kanareikin (the head of the delegation) insisted. Why? For a very simple reason: he had to deliver a report, and the report had to be written, and who better than I could write a report which would both win the approval of our leaders, and at the same time produce a decent impression Over There! Serikov was included in the group of tourists. And that too

is readily understandable.

The composition of a Soviet delegation to an international scientific congress is always a matter of the greatest importance to the state. The most varied considerations have to be borne in mind: the interests of a variety of organisations, the proper balance of nationalities, the right age range, a proper balance between the sexes, the numbers of representatives of various academic ranks, family relationships, and so on. This problem takes at least a year and the efforts of many authorities to sort out. The question of the part the KGB should play in such matters has been discussed repeatedly and resolved definitively. But there is one extremely interesting but less well-known aspect. It is clear that any one of us (or almost any one) is prepared to carry out (and does carry out from time to time, either directly or indirectly) missions for the KGB. We are patriots. And moreover, for a reward as considerable as a trip abroad at the state's expense, we are prepared to do even more.

But that is not enough for the KGB. They include their own people in every delegation. To what end? Here opinions differ. To carry out tasks which cannot be entrusted to ordinary informer-scientists. To keep an eye on the delegates' behaviour. To stop anyone defecting. There is certainly no smoke without fire. But I incline to the view that the reason is far simpler. The delegates keep an eye on each other's behaviour every bit as well as the professional snoopers. The information they provide is more highly qualified. The special missions for the most part are just a sham. Genuinely serious intelligence work is not done in that way. Some people defect anyway. And those who do get away are trusted and reliable people. Untrustworthy people are simply not allowed out. It is simply that the KGB has the right to take part in all visits abroad and uses it for the benefit of its employees. It is a benefit in the same sense as apartments, rest homes, goods in short supply, tickets for theatres and exhibitions, and so on. And all this is distributed (I've been able to talk with their "Boys" once or twice) according to the normal rules by which perks are distributed in the Soviet system. And the KGB agents are just as avid for foreign clothes as the doctors and the professors. But they have one great advantage: they don't need to present a report, discuss it, get it passed by the Glavlit (the censorship), to take part in meetings. Their intellectual level is very much the same as that of the average delegate. At worst, when their crass stupidity cannot be concealed, we pass them off as representatives of the non-Russian Republics or as survivors of Stalinism. In such

cases, a poor or totally non-existent grasp of foreign languages is a great asset.

The toast

"UNCLE ANTON". Sashka asked, "why were you sent to the camps? For nothing, like everyone else?"

"For something, like everyone else, or nearly everyone else. For a poem about one of Stalin's toasts."

"Do you still remember it?"

"Of course. You don't forget such things."

*The Leader rose up
to his puny height,
With a twisted grin
on his face,
And this
he said:
Our toast tonight
Is the glorious
Russian race.
Their fate
is the harshest
fate of all,
Their torments
too many
to say,
Without them we
should be
slaves one and all,
Not the bosses
that we are today.
They have given their blood,
they have poured out sweat
Until they were
ready
to die.
They have starved
and they've thirsted,
and, far worse yet,
They've been living
like pigs in a sty.
We have made them to suffer,
to languish in woe,
Their lives
are with misery
fraught;
So that after
our treatment
they're bound to know
Even hell
is a pleasure
resort.*

Have we done them
the slightest
bit of good?
I still
cannot
comprehend why
They should take
all we say
as quite understood
When all we have done
is
to die.
What other fools
in what other land
Would let us
over them ride?
Tell me anyone else
who would raise a hand
To save
their torturers'
hide.
He raised his glass
and he sipped
the wine,
Wiped his whiskers,
his face serene.
And then his eyes
began to shine
Not a trace
of guilt
to be seen.
Then the whole room
burst out
in a joyful sound
And the abject
Russian nation
Licked their
tears of joy
from off the ground
And made premature
confession.

"Oh ho", said Lenka. "According to Solzh-nitsyn, you ought to have been killed."

"They took my military career into account. And anyway, it was the time when things were moving towards Khrushchevism."

"So you weren't put inside for nothing."

"Not for nothing. At that time, it was seldom for nothing. They could always manufacture something."

"You've read Solzhenitsyn, of course?"

“Yes!”

"And what do you think of him?"

"I bow very low before him."

“So what he writes is the truth?”

"It's the truth but not the whole truth. And partial truth distorts the whole picture. It's not so much truth I respect him for, as for his revolt against falsehood and oppression."

"If he's right, why isn't he published here?"

“Don’t ask stupid questions”, said Sashka.

“It’s not a stupid question. What is stupid are the people who haven’t published Solzhenitsyn here. If he’d been published here, he wouldn’t have achieved such a stupendous world-wide effect, and there wouldn’t be this constant interest in his books. It’s always better to be open about crimes which you can’t conceal.”

“Particularly other people’s crimes.”

“And if the crimes are still going on. . . .”

Anti-Soviet conversations like that are always going on in my home. And there's nothing that I can do to stop them. And what is worst of all, I don't want to stop them and I even take part in them myself.

The arrangement of forces

THE SOCIO-POLITICAL STRUCTURE of our society is not as simple as it may seem at first sight. For example, it has become the accepted thing to consider that if a man is engaged in the study of historical materialism or, even more, of scientific communism, he is *a priori* a conservative or even an obscurantist. But that is far from being the case. There are just as many obscurantists in the ranks of mathematicians and physicists as there are in those of the philosophers. They exist even among musicians. For instance, ask Kolmogorov or Shostakovich to sign any letter condemning Solzhenitsyn and Sakharov, and they will scrawl their names without a moment's thought. Yet I know philosophers who have refused to do this even though they realise in advance that they will be punished for their refusal. The physicists themselves will not name more than two or three people who can be regarded as "decent" people in the cohorts of science. They usually name Kapitsa. But what has he really done? Merely refrained from the most degrading actions. Of course, under our conditions that is already quite something. But phenomena of this kind blur the dividing lines in the socio-political picture of our society.

First of all, we must introduce the concept of the individual whom we are taking into account. I

cannot define this concept in precise terms. I can only clarify it somewhat. For instance, recently the workers at a Moscow factory organised something like a strike. It was a very serious and important action. But these workers are not individuals who must be taken into account as individuals (let us say who count in a social sense). On the other hand, a man like Kapitsa has never undertaken any political action. But he does count in a social sense. This type of individual exerts an influence on the country in its socio-political aspect, either by the very fact of his existence and his normal daily activity, or by particular kinds of action which he carries out regularly. The distinctions which follow apply only to individuals of this kind.

The first distinction is between those who are integrated and those who are not (or those who stand outside). This distinction betrays itself in different ways in different fields of activity. For example, among us philosophers, the non-integrated are the people who deliberately choose to ignore Marxism while working on the same problems. There are very few people like this. The majority of them distance themselves so far that to all intents and purposes they change their profession and can usually no longer be counted among the people who should be taken into account. Although they speak scornfully of our philosophy and our way of life, in fact they amount to nothing, since in their new official life they are ordinary citizens of no importance. Those few "deviants" who remain play a substantial role. They have an influence on the liberals (more of these later).

For instance, in the field of philosophy, under the influence of the "deviants", not only the liberals, but even the obscurantists have tried to reduce to a minimum their quotations from the classics of Marxism, and have quoted the positivists as serious scientists, and so on. These "deviationists" are, as a rule, people of considerable stature. Sometimes active dissidents appear among them. It is this category that has engendered people like Sakharov, Turchin, Shafarevich, and Rostropovich. Many of them have emigrated. A characteristic feature of the "deviants" is that they are unwilling or unable to integrate themselves into the Soviet way of life and Soviet ideology.

The second distinction lies within the integrated group. These latter are people who must be taken into account by virtue of and specifically on account of their professional activity. By this criterion, for instance, Shafarevich and Turchin do not fall into this category because their involvement in politics takes place in a context other than that of their professional activity. On the other hand,

Neizvestniy, Tarkovskiy, Maximov, Okudzhava and many other artists and writers have become involved in social action by virtue of their professional preoccupations. These "integrated" figures can be divided crudely into "liberals" and "conservatives." Once again, it is very difficult (if indeed it is possible at all) to give a precise definition of these categories. The borders between them are fluid, changeable, almost imperceptible. But it is possible to give some approximate description and "examples." And that will be sufficient. A characteristic example of the "liberals" is the poet Tvardovskiy. Nesmeyanov is a similar example from the academic world. Another, but less well known, is Academician Rumyantsev. In the past, he was an important party figure, and later vice-president of the Academy. In the most liberal years he gave his protection to concrete sociology, and that was his undoing. He was removed from the vice-presidency and from his post of director of the Institute of Concrete Social Research. Khrushchev became a liberal. And even Brezhnev to a certain extent bore a liberal stamp, even if only by inertia. A liberal can be distinguished from a conservative not merely by the fact that the conservative is in favour of putting people in jail while the liberal is against—a liberal can be as good at putting people in jail as a conservative, and there are conservative critics of the "cult of personality"—but even more so by a purely personal inclination towards greater flexibility, towards rather greater humanity, gentleness, courtesy, delicacy, relaxation—and less discipline.

JUST AS IN THE CASE of the conservatives, the liberals are not all of the same cast. For some of them liberalism is merely a trait of character which it was permissible to acquire or to display in the post-Stalin period. For another group, liberalism is a convenient means of self-assertion and career building. For a third group, it is their tribute to the fashion of the day. For only a very small group is liberalism a matter of principle. All liberals favour the Soviet way of life; they are against only its extremes, and favour improvements to it—and improvements, moreover, whose aim is to consolidate the Soviet system. They accuse the conservatives of being incapable of serving the cause of communism in a proper way (i.e. in accordance with the demands of the age). They believe that they can accomplish this better. There are even liberals within the ranks of the apparatus of the Central Committee and the KGB. There was a time

when it was rumoured that the KGB was the most liberal organisation which we'd had. Liberalism is the striving of Soviet society to breathe a shade more freely, an aspiration which is exploited by a certain category of people to their own egoistical ends.

Among the liberals, there can be isolated a small number of people who for one reason or another are unable to integrate themselves into the Soviet way of life. A typical example of this is Neizvestnyi who was driven out of Soviet society by the efforts of his colleagues because he was too gifted and original, and because he had become widely known in the West. Yet he was a Soviet man to the highest degree, and he had a greater capacity than anyone you like for adapting himself to our conditions. Rogozin became a similar case. And in my view, Okudzhava and Tarkovskiy are also in this category although they have not emigrated.

Finally, if we take society as a whole, we see that a very small number of people fall into the role of opponents, champions of freedom, or denouncers. Their names are well known. Their influence on the whole of Soviet society is immense even though everything is done to try to conceal it. The activity of Solzhenitsyn and Sakharov constitutes an entire epoch in the socio-political development of Soviet society. It should be said that Solzhenitsyn was thrust forward as an opponent not only because of the content of his books and speeches, but also because of his talent as a writer. The immense army of our mediocre writers cast him out so that he should not disturb their habitual way of life and their established criteria.

The radiant future

“WHAT NEWS OF THE BOOK?”

Anton merely made a weary gesture in reply. And I felt sorry for him. I am, after all, a kindly man—which will prove my undoing. And, to be quite honest, the book isn't badly written. If it comes out one day, it will be a notable event.

Almost a third of Anton's book is about the future of communism. It's a topic we've seldom discussed, and then usually in the form of jokes or threats. I have produced “witticisms” at about the level of the wit of *Krokodil*; just wait, if we live to be old enough to see communism, then we'll show them our capacities and our needs. In these cases, Anton used to tell me that from this point of view, communism was being built relatively quickly and easily, which was its main attraction for the

broad masses of the oppressed, backward and disadvantaged population. But after two or three generations, when the population becomes almost completely literate, when it forgets hunger and exhausting labour, begins to be more or less adequately dressed, and in general acquires a higher standard of living than in the recent past, then the specifically communist problems will make their first appearance. People no longer give a damn about what happened before the revolution. They base their judgments on contemporary comparisons. Comparison with the past is double-edged. Official propaganda drags everything bad up from the past to try to convince the population that they live extremely well. On the other hand, the malcontents pull all the good things out of the past to underline their present distress. And both parties falsify the past if only by taking simply one side of it and by judging it from a modern standpoint. But that is normal since the past is invoked only to support judgments on the present.

However, as we approached any positive identification of specifically communist problems and the prospect for their solution, our discussions usually broke off or degenerated into petty squabbles over semantic inadequacies. But clearly from Anton's point of view, it is precisely the problem of the future of communism which is central. He only begins at the point at which the critics and apologists of communism have somehow or other left off.

I had skimmed through this section of Anton's book very swiftly, but I was able to gain a certain idea, albeit fragmentary and incomplete, of this part of his thinking. Anton refuses to consider the future of the Soviet Union in the same spirit as did Amalrik. He says absolutely nothing about the historical destiny of such and such a people or state or about the consequences of their relationship. He merely examines tendencies which have already transpired to a greater or lesser degree and which derive from the very essence of communist social structure. Here are the basic tendencies he deals with.

Social stratification, and the hereditary character of the reproduction of these strata (which sometimes goes as far as hereditary professions). The inheritance of one's position in society does not come by birthright, for there is no such thing, but from the practical possibilities of one's parents. The children of people from the highest social strata only descend to lower strata in exceptional circumstances, while children of parents from the lower strata only exceptionally break through to the highest. Of course, mobility from one stratum

to another is more frequent between neighbouring strata. It is possible to work out coefficients of such mobility. Inasmuch as there is a hierarchy of strata, the possibility of mobility from stratum to stratum is reduced as the distance between the strata increases. Even under present conditions, where social differentiation is still very fluid, in the Soviet Union the strata are becoming more clearly defined, and movement from the lowest strata to the highest and effective possibilities of maintaining children on a sufficiently high social level have become much more difficult.

AT THIS POINT, I thought that I must do all I could to see that Lenka went on to higher education, and not just any kind, but something with a future, and that Sashka got a decent job with possibilities of promotion. Which of our acquaintances' children have become manual workers, junior clerks or school teachers and so on? None of them. The children of our academicians are, for the most part, mediocre to say the least, yet they are all in good positions. This tendency is plain for all to see. But everyone maintains a decent silence about it.

Anton gives a classification of the strata of communist society. He classes them as Higher, Middle and Lower. And each stratum has gradations within it. He bases this division on the principles of mediatisation and discontinuity. These are rather sophisticated mathematical toys, and I did not understand them. In their simplest form, they mean something like this. The differentiation of social strata is something which is also firmly fixed in men's consciousness and is in part due to this consciousness. As in a large society there is in effect a virtually continuous scale of living standards and way of life, to appreciate one's own distinction from the stratum immediately below one needs a mediator, an intermediary link which makes the social differentiation clearer. But that is not, of course, the only problem. There are indicators which establish the principal frontiers between the three strata referred to. These indicators concern all the major aspects of the life of individuals: the distribution of material and spiritual advantages, the way one spends one's work and leisure time, medical services, juridical protection and so on. At the present time, one still frequently comes across cases of representatives of a lower class living better than representatives of a higher class. Such accidents will be systematically tracked down and eliminated (as is being done at the present time).

Also at the present time, we can observe some lack of correspondence between the cultural level of representatives of a given stratum and the social rank of that stratum. This shows particularly clearly in the lower and middle strata of a certain section of the intelligentsia, where the cultural level is fairly high, while the cultural level of the ruling upper strata is extremely low. This is a transitory phenomenon. There is already visible a powerful tendency towards the raising of the cultural level of the upper strata (special schools, knowledge of foreign languages, access to the finest works of modern art and so on). Within two or three generations, the principal consumers and connoisseurs of the highest products of culture will almost exclusively be the highest strata of society (as has always been the case in the past). And even now a rigid policy of "culture for the people" is being promoted, which entirely suits the lower strata of society, a policy which creates lower forms of culture (called higher forms by the propagandists) for the lower strata. It would be foolish to hope that while feeding the "people" far worse than the privileged strata, they would provide the "people" with spiritual nourishment of a higher quality than they themselves demand. The level of spiritual nourishment of the middle strata (which include the multimillion strong army of doctors, teachers, engineers, technologists, scientific researchers, officers and so on) is rather higher than that of the lowest strata. They receive some crumbs from above. And at the present time, they still manage to seize more than a few for themselves. But everything is tending towards enclosure within the rigid parameters of the culture to which "they are entitled." Moreover, these strata do not especially aspire to the phenomena of the highest, or at least to the active, modern culture. Thus we see a tendency to equate the level of culture to social rank.

THE TERRITORIAL and economic enforced attachment of members of the lowest social strata to their place of work. This enforced attachment is now obvious. It also affects the higher strata, although here possibilities exist for evading it: transfers to other jobs, business trips, access to private transport, education, marriage and so on. Communist society has powerful means of keeping the population static, irrespective of the size of the country; the system of housing allocation, increased salaries, premiums, creches and kindergartens and so on. And that is not to mention the system of registration. It must not be forgotten

that social processes in society are closely linked with biological processes; the most highly favoured individuals from a biological point of view have more chances of improving their social level (by means of advantageous marriage, athletic success and so on); thus there is a rigorous process of biological selection according to social stratification. It is believed that in time even the highest leaders of the country will look better than they do now. At all events, if one considers the upper strata *en masse*, there can already be observed a certain increase in stature and an improved personal appearance. However, certain phenomena which are survivals of the past exercise a braking effect on the biological improvement of the higher strata (such factors as the advantage of "proletarian" descent, or membership of a "healthy" socialist family). In the historical conditions under which communist society was first formed, there are powerful factors inhibiting the realisation of this and other tendencies. But that is merely a question of time. For example, at the moment there is still a directive prohibiting the entry of the children of intellectuals into higher education straight from school. But in practice, this directive does not apply. It merely contributes to the development of a system of bribery and corruption in this most important sphere of our life.

The unification of the system of power. This tendency too is quite evident, inasmuch as the electoral system is pure eyewash. Whether the enormous parasitic institution of "electoral" power survives or not will depend on circumstances. The system of power is extremely weighty and complex. Why should this be? There are several reasons. In particular, there is the ruling stratum's interest in perpetuating itself. There is also a tendency to make the functions of power as primitive as possible and to eliminate risk (a system under which there is both impunity and an absence of personal responsibility). Already the function of power lies in the hands of at least one-fifth of the population (together with their families). This adds up to tens of millions of people. But the power system is not a social stratum. The distinction between strata is drawn on a different plane. But power itself is divided into strata. For instance, the local policeman is a member of a lower stratum than that of a university professor.

IN THE SAME SPIRIT, Anton ran through all the aspects of the life of a communist society. He described the type of economy, of law, art and

science, of ideology, of the education system, the system of distribution, personal relationships and so on. When I looked through the book it at first seemed to me that he had deliberately chosen all the worst manifestations of our life and turned them into a law of society. But I soon noticed that in no way did he evaluate this as bad or good, he simply stated it as a fact and developed arguments to support his thesis, according to which all these aspects are endemic to communist society. It is perhaps worth pausing briefly on one further tendency he mentions. But first a few words on communism as a type of society, since I have referred to this problem.

Anton defines communist society by means of its basic cell—each separate self-contained institution (a factory, an institute, an office, a military unit, a school and so on). This cell has its own specific structure. Everyone knows what kind of structure that is. The important thing is that it is through this cell that each individual contributes his strengths to society and receives everything from society. From this point of view, all individuals are placed in an identical position. Society as a whole is the aggregate of these cells. And they are combined into one whole by means of social mechanisms of the same cellular type. Because of the vastness of the social organism, it is differentiated in accordance with the laws of differentiation of large social systems, but in conditions which are common both to the country as a whole and to each individual cell. And then, proceeding from a few very simple rules which govern relationships between individuals within the cells, Anton isolates the inevitable tendencies which I have already referred to in part. Among them is a tendency towards mass purges which is worthy of our special attention. At the present time, following the appearance of Solzhenitsyn's books, it is a major, world-wide topic of thought.

MASS PURGES. First, they are open and approved. Secondly, they can be carried out with impunity. Thirdly, they are useful in many respects: for dealing with dissidents and rivals, for maintaining order, in the struggle for power, to provide an unpaid work-force, and so on. And fourthly, a modern society is constantly faced with tasks which can be fulfilled only by the use of mass forced labour. That, no doubt, is the most important aspect. This kind of problem is not the result of chance. Gigantic modern societies cannot exist without the resolution of these problems. A

partial solution is to disguise the element of constraint in this use of mass labour. We can see this, for instance, in the compulsory drafting of young people into the army and the use of the army as a work-force; the formation of teams of students to work on building projects; the despatch of city dwellers to the countryside for the vegetable harvest; Komsomol appeals for volunteers to work on massive projects, and so on. But these are half-measures and they will never produce the necessary number of volunteers. Moreover, normal work is interrupted. And above all, these people all bring with them their normal prejudices about living conditions which have to be satisfied at least to some degree. And such an army of workers cannot be used for just any kind of work in just any kind of conditions.

There is a need for an enormous permanent work-force which is cheap to maintain and which can be used however and wherever it is needed. Now the places where it can be used are widely known. So society must, in one way or another, find a way of meeting its own demand for such a slave army. It has already invented a convenient method of doing this—the method of repression, i.e. of punishment for some crime. This form of approach gives both a “legal” and a “moral” justification to the existence of an army of slaves and to the conditions of its inhuman exploitation. Hitherto history has been generous: the Revolution, the Civil War, the war against Germany, and other real facts of our existence have provided both human material in abundance for this army and also a “legal” and “moral” justification for its existence.

There then followed a hiatus, the reasons for which are widely known. Of course, the repressions never stopped. But throughout all of this last period they have not become massive. There are many people in jail but for the most part they are criminals. And for the time being, their number is comparable with the world average (for the moment this is a statistical fact). But this situation cannot last for long. Either history itself will provide a convenient pretext and an appropriate form for the coming mass repressions, or society itself will spontaneously provoke events which will produce the same result. The most likely outcome of all will be a combination of the one with the other (as happened, incidentally, in the past).

But the system of mass repressions has one major defect: it involves the creation throughout society of a particular state of mind and of particular organisations to carry out repressions over a fairly long period of time. And that, as

experience has shown, is a force which has a tendency to get out of control. And for this reason, the leadership of the country fears the system of mass repression no less than do the liberal intellectuals. This acts as a restraining force. But how long can that last? The struggle for power will sweep away the “liberal group” and the orientation towards mass repressions (in some veiled form, of course) will serve as an argument for the “right wing group” in the struggle.

NEXT, ANTON ALIGNS HIMSELF with Shafarevich in saying that communist society has much in common with the societies of the Incas, ancient Egyptians, ancient Chinese and so on. But he considered it more important to stress the differences between our society and the old “Imperial” models. This distinction relates, above all, to the human material which constitutes the body of the “Empire” and which summarises within itself historical facts such as science, technology, art and so on. A great part of this human material is condemned to hitherto unheard-of spiritual and moral suffering and resistance. And the real aspect which the communist society of the future wears will depend on the battle between its internal forces.

Finally, Anton examines in detail the possibility of an opposition to the dominant tendencies of communism and comes to the following conclusion. Communist leaders must now and forevermore forget any idea about a peaceful and harmonious progress towards the Radiant Future so long as they issue their directives and take their decisions, while the other citizens fulfil and overfulfil quotas and sing the praises of their beloved leaders. The Radiant Future is a fight already begun against the ignominies of communism which are already common knowledge. It will be a bloody battle with many victims. It will produce still more models of the greatest personal heroism, which will be comparable with those of the past. And the first stage of this battle which has already started bears the name of Solzhenitsyn. Anton believes his ideas to be an expression of historical optimism (unlike those of Zamyatin, Orwell and Shafarevich).

A hymn to Moscow

FORCE OF HABIT pulled me back to the Old Square. I had decided to seek an interview with

someone. With whom? I don't know. Why? I don't know that either. My only principle was "you never know" or "who knows, something might turn up"... But then I changed my mind and I wandered off to the Centre. By the Metropol Hotel I came across Victor Ivanovich. He was clearly pleased to see me. I suggested we drop into the café and have a meal. He said that the food there was awful, and suggested instead that we should go to the "Uzbekistan." I said there was no point in that because there was always a tremendous queue. He said there was no need to worry about queues, they wouldn't be a problem for us. And indeed, half an hour later we were sitting in the "Uzbekistan", with Victor Ivanovich pouring out a bewildering stream of orders to the obsequiously stooping waiter, and me going anxiously through my pockets. Victor Ivanovich told me not to worry—he was my host this evening.

Then we began to talk. I started by moaning about Moscow—all the hurry, the pressure, the greyness, the boredom, the irritations of life. In short, I said everything which is usually said about Moscow in intellectual circles.

"I can't agree with you at all", said Victor Ivanovich, after I had said my say. We had started off with a glass of vodka each, and were now setting to on a range of regal hors d'oeuvres, the like of which I had not seen since my last visit to the Korytovs. "You simply don't know Moscow, you're not aware of its real life. Moscow is a great city. One of the greatest cities in the world, in every respect. And if we take into account the intensity of life here, it might even be *the* greatest. Today the pulse of the world beats here in Moscow. Moscow is anything you like, except a provincial city, as you suggest. Paris and London are more provincial these days than Moscow is, and that's even more true of Rome, Vienna, Madrid or such like European cities. No, Moscow is far from being provincial."

I felt slightly drunk, not from the wine, but from the unaccustomed delicious food, and the general excitement and animation of the restaurant. Victor Ivanovich dealt with the wines, the food and the waiters like an experienced habitué of such places. There was little trace of the old Victor Ivanovich, my former drinking companion in the Dive.

"You think I'm joking", he went on. "Not in the least. In Moscow you can find absolutely anything you want. Any wines, any food, any kind of girl. The girls in Moscow these days are better than any you'll find in Paris. Girls of any age, any appearance, any intellect, every temperament. There's everything in Moscow. Drugs. Syphilis.

Spies. Foreigners. Currency dealers. Prostitutes. Buddhists. Geniuses. Sharks. Homosexuals. Seekers after God. Parapsychologists. Absolutely everything in Moscow."

"But all the same, it's grey, boring, colourless", I said. "You only have to compare it with the life style you'll find described in, say, Balzac or Maupassant."

"All right. Let's do some comparing. Women? I assure you that the good ladies of Moscow are more than a match for your Parisiennes. Some of them are even better. The only problem is that you haven't got access to them. We've got twenty times more ballerinas and actresses than they have, and they're chosen from a far wider range of human material. And I promise you there's been great progress in this area.

"Food? If you only knew the kind of things people stuff themselves with in Moscow, you wouldn't believe your eyes. You don't even know the names of things you'll find on the tables of our upper strata. Apartments? Houses? Palaces? Even Balzac's heroes didn't live at Versailles or in the Louvre. And these days as far as apartments and villas are concerned, we're no worse off here than the French in that golden age. I've been to Paris, after all, and I've been in their homes. There's no comparison! If we had the time I could show you some apartments here in Moscow that would make you gasp. Jewels? You don't believe they exist any more? Yet we've got people here who live like Western millionaires, just as many as there are in the West. Just look over there! You see that fat old cow in black? Each of her ear-rings is worth a mansion. And look at her paws! There are scores of people like her these days.

"Entertainments? My dear man, they may be inaccessible to you, but for people who know their way around there's no need to be bored for a moment. There are a hundred times more cinemas and theatres in Moscow. And for those in the know, in Moscow you can see any foreign films you like, listen to any foreign music, read any book that's published. Conversation? Do you believe that the heroes of Balzac and Maupassant had more interesting conversations than we do? That's nonsense, and I've made a special study of the subject. In Moscow literally hundreds of thousands of people have conversations on a far higher intellectual level. And there's not enough going on, you say? Who was it who told you that Moscow life lacked drama? You just ought to go round the courts! Or read the letters that pour in to newspaper offices! And the dramas of Moscow are no less dramatic than those of Balzac."

WE WERE EATING exquisite Asiatic dishes and drinking wines which had long been impossible to find in the shops, and as we emptied bottle after bottle we progressively lost contact with the mire of our existence as it was, is now and ever shall be beyond the walls of the golden oasis where we sat.

"Moscow has become the centre of attraction for many millions of people", pursued Victor Ivanovich. "Do you know how many people pour into Moscow every year despite every kind of ban and prohibition? And many of them are successful, I'd have you know. Just look at our statesmen, our generals, our top writers and artists, our actors, our sportsmen . . . are many of them native Muscovites? What's happening today in Moscow isn't just an analogy with the Paris of Balzac and Maupassant. There are a thousand such Parises here. That might be the one defect of our life: too many Parises. No feeling of exclusivity. But that's another problem."

We sat in the restaurant until it closed. We had drunk all kinds of wines, yet we left the place completely sober.

"That's what it's all about", said Victor Ivanovich. "The main cause of alcoholism is poor-quality liquor and no decent food to eat with it. The amount we've knocked back tonight would have been enough to put a dozen ordinary alcoholics on their backs."

At night, when it is deserted, Moscow looks quite different from daytime. The dimly illuminated streets look beautiful and full of promise. The lit windows (God, how many!) create an illusion of mystery.

"You're right on one point, I agree", said Victor Ivanovich. "Moscow hasn't got enough poets. Writers like Balzac and Maupassant. If only we had a literature on that level, Moscow life would appear in quite a different light. And it would

genuinely become different. It's not enough just to dress well, drink and eat, sleep with lovely women, go to shows and have witty and inspiring conversations. Those are necessary elements of a decent life. But that's not all. We ought to be specifically aware of all these benefits, and in a socially recognised form. We've just had a first-class meal. But alas that's just a physiological fact, not a social fact. And in particular it's not a literary fact. Moscow needs its own great poets. But will they appear? While we wait, we must still go on living. We must live, d'you understand? Live!"

We came out on to Gorki Street, crossed Red Square and reached the river embankment.

"Have you ever happened to watch a man quite unashamedly and successfully going about the business of making himself a career? You see him as a cynic, an intriguer, a careerist, a trickster. He makes you sick. But you're attracted by him. And sometimes you even admire him: that bastard's really making it! Moscow puts me very much in mind of that kind of creature. The city is openly and successfully making a career for herself. She may be grey and mediocre, but all the same she's crawling through into the number one position. And which of our leaders didn't seem to be grey and mediocre in the beginning? In a hundred years or so, the history of Moscow will intrigue people just as much as the history of Paris at the time of the French Revolution. People will pore over the biography of Brezhnev. While Solzhenitsyn will be forgotten."

My interlocutor was right. But it's a pity!

"Why's it a pity?"

"It's a pity that Brezhnev's biography will be studied and people will forget Solzhenitsyn."

And that's me saying that, a man from Brezhnev's party!

"There's nothing you can do about it! That's life."

Johannes Gross

Prosperity & Its Discontents

On a German Paradox

THE *BUNDESREPUBLIK* of Germany is a morose land, but its inhabitants are happy and contented. This paradox requires countless adjustments on points of detail but is, I am convinced, largely confirmed by everyday experience. Walk through the streets of West Germany, visit markets and department stores, travel on the tram or by train, and you encounter people who more or less resemble the rest of the Western world—rather better dressed perhaps, and less endowed with social graces, but on the whole there is no visible lack of *joie de vivre* or of pleasure in setting up house and home in this earthly vale of tears. It is confirmed, too, by the results of public opinion polls concerning the general mood. There is widespread desire for more “warmth of feeling” in social relations; but otherwise, year in year out, there is approval (growing, if anything) among the population for the agreeable circumstances of their own lives; and a similar approval of their system of government and national economy reflects their satisfaction with themselves and their good fortune. To judge by a representative cross-section, the sum total of individual feelings, of the private emotions that embrace private worries and fears, centres on their personal health, on their jobs, how the children are getting on, together with pleasure in private achievements, some in the past, some still to come.

The official view of the situation is totally different. This public view is recreated every day by officially appointed representatives of the Republic, spokesmen on social concerns, by leading lights in ecclesiastical, literary and artistic circles, and finally by the professional manufacturers, custodians and exploiters of public opinion. Its relation to the privately cherished view of life in Germany is no longer merely discordant but is one of open con-

tradiction; and yet at the same time in a peculiarly characteristic way remains part and parcel of it. Whether you read the German daily papers or the weeklies (either those with too many pictures or those with too much text), whether you watch the television programmes or listen to the radio, hear a sermon from the pulpit or listen in smoke-filled rooms to the pre-packaged opinions of your political party, your trade union, or your club, you get the identical impression of inescapable desolation, even that the present order is damned. This impression is not accompanied by the fear or loathing or despair which should be there if it was all really serious and in terrible earnest, but rather by a stultifying, mind-shattering boredom.

Such is the public, artificially created view of our country—with its interminable open-ended television discussions about the problems of integrating flipped-out drug-addicts into society; with innumerable magazine articles full of caring concern for whorehouses and hostels for wayward teenagers; with its repetitive reports on the misfortunes of all those creatures who were not lucky enough to be aborted; with sanctimonious talk about guilt, shame and atonement but never about redemption; with its muck-raking documentation of the synonymy of the terms pollution and environment: with unceasing protests against evil nuclear power, high-handed employers, black-listing *Berufsverbote*, and stifling bureaucracy—in short, with its panorama of a nasty, brutish life which begins with infant mortality and ends in the misery of old age. If this view of Germany as a land of handicapped, oppressed, and regimented people coincided even approximately with the actual experience and view of life of those who live there, then the Federal Republic should surely be a land of emigration rather than immigration.

But nobody thinks of emigrating. It takes a deal of effort and money to persuade technicians or students, teachers or businessmen to leave the country for even a short assignment; and the diplomatic service, offering far-away foreign posts, has recruiting problems for the first time in its existence.

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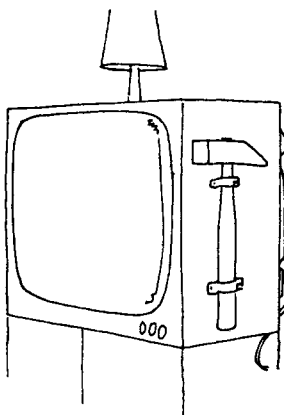
The Gloom-mongers

THIS DISCREPANCY between lack of public confidence and actual private experience has a counterpart in the schizophrenic self-image of post-War Germans. As a scholar or a farmer, as a footballer or *paterfamilias*, the German has an innate pride, just as he does as a Bavarian or a

Hanseatic citizen. He feels perfectly at home in every social role, save as a member of a nation. There is, of course, a certain sense of national pride, but this is essentially unpolitical. It stems from economic success and revolves round it, round the world-wide glitter of the Mercedes star and the vaunted hardness of the German D-Mark. But as citizens in the political sense, Germans have no national pride; they prefer to be simple members

Is the Public Interested?

Hamburg



WHETHER in Britain by the BBC or in Western Germany (by the ARD and the ZDF), the function of "public broadcasting" is to serve the public. Well, how is the German public being served?

As one who was prominently identified with both radio programmes and television documentary films,

on both home and foreign subjects, let me first say this. What goes on in the world is presented each day, filtered through the editorial process of the various news programmes, and it makes little difference whether they are called "Heute" or "Tagesschau", or whatever. The selection of the items has to obey identical rules and regulations.

The "real news", the preferred stories, are always those that can be illustrated; and the illustrations are always handled as if they were fragile and breakable and only to be touched with insulated gloves. As a result all the presentations resemble each other like standardised postal packages. There is always some robot-like figure in front of the cameras who reads the items that have been prepared for him; and every now and then he pauses studiously to glance up at the audience out there. A slight twinkle of a small smile is permissible; it may even help to ease the suffering reflected in the pictures of the "Boat People" or of some other horrific disaster.

Behind the newscast there is always a standard ballet of dancing and whirling pictures, now in close-up, now in montage, sometimes cartographical, sometimes symbolic (a German eagle, an American flag, a British crown. . .). Technically it always works: even when the effort is made to get reports from their foreign correspondents via the Satellite-in-space connection. In exactly 60 seconds, as specified in the

expensive contract for the hired time, some complicated international crisis is simplified and explained.

CLEARLY, THE GERMAN public broadcasting services are not lacking in wherewithal—only in ideas and in courage. Otherwise they wouldn't resemble each other so closely, even down to the erratic slip-ups (which are often the only human intrusion in the machinery of the programmes). Of course one doesn't expect on the occasion of some earthquake or other natural catastrophe for the celebrated lady newscaster to be seen dashing into the studios, her lovely blouse slightly unbuttoned, her attractive locks a bit unkempt. But is it quite necessary for all of these programmes to have a whiff of chloroform about them? One cannot escape the feeling that so long as the events of the world are in the hands of the staid respectable Public Broadcasting institutions, nothing too bad can ever be taking place out there.

FOR THIS IS the crux of the matter: everything is overshadowed by what we call the *parteilichste Proporz*, that is to say, the balance among all the major political parties in the controlling boards of Public Broadcasting. And in that shadow everything turns out to be grey. If the news is from Bonn and concerns the Bundeskanzler, then wherever he may happen to be, the Leader of the Opposition will be shown holding forth with what also purports to be something newsworthy.

I have known American editors on New York TV programmes who have been fired for dispensing such boring fairness. For over there there is no functionary of any political party—or any elected official, no matter how high (think of Kennedy's protests, remember the Nixon-Agnew outrage which followed on Lyndon Johnson's impatience)—who can exert any influence, and certainly not the kind of decisive influence daily exerted in the Bundesrepublik. The paradox is that US-TV's dependence on advertising income guarantees its independence from political pressures. Unlike bei uns nobody goes around checking the political affiliations of the editors and broadcasters to see that it is all "in proportion" to the political spectrum in the land.

of the human race, or, when necessary, good Europeans.

Though the publicly expressed mood is one of gloom, the true situation cannot be termed *mies* or gloomy. The word *mies*, which entered colloquial German from Yiddish or Hebrew via the language of the money-market (and, perhaps, from *Gaunersprache* or rogues' cant), does not refer to a specific state of misery but means something like

repulsive or ugly, and it leads to the term *Miesmacher*, the wet-blanket who speculates for a fall, pours cold water on all hope and optimism, spreads dismal gossip and dark rumours. The wet-blanket does not change the facts of the situation, but puts a black interpretation on them, which can of course rebound on him in turn.

Our *Miesmacher*, or to put it more courteously and precisely, the purveyors of public moroseness,

THE GERMAN-AMERICAN CONTRAST could not be sharper. Over there, in the strange world of "commercial broadcasting" the public is served by TV personalities who have proven qualities of knowledge, integrity and often "charisma" (Eric Sevareid, Brinkley-Huntley, Ed Murrow, et al.). And how they reflect what has been happening in the land and abroad is not influenced by the rules and regulations of "political balance" and "public interest." Public interest, yes, of course!—but in the sense of what the public finds interesting. As a result, one gets more news, more accurately, more quickly; interviews are lively and to the point; questions are put in order to be illuminating, not *respektvoll* or deferential.

IN GERMANY the strait-jacket of "public" control and responsibility has had one striking consequence—nothing was left but to be, at least, technically perfect. Nothing could make for more perfect perennial boredom than never to expect something unexpected, some bit of spontaneity or improvisation. It could be that the types of executives, producers, editors and others which such a system produces and shapes would not even be up to some critical fast-moving situation. I doubt whether anybody on our German television screens would be capable—as would, say, Mike Wallace in New York or Robin Day in London—of discussing, questioning, arguing with a bunch of political extremists (on the Left or on the Right, and we have plenty of both), at some public meeting or in an agitated studio.

A few years ago in Paris a group of militants suddenly occupied the studio and wanted to have their say; they did; but they were more than adequately dealt with by the French broadcasters present. This is not so much a tribute to the French kind of state-controlled broadcasting as simple evidence that the French have been learning from the Americans: you do need "personalities" (however cliché the word has become) in the studio, and not lifeless marionettes. Nor does one need all those well-coiffeured handsome young men, with professionally-schooled elocutionary accents, to dominate the screen. One old man—"Uncle" Walter

Cronkite—has been doing very nicely in the States for over 30 years; to a whole generation his experience and talent have vouched for his reliability and responsibility. He writes his own texts, and allows himself a personal note of emphasis and at times even excitement. He may sit there Jupiter-like at the central desk, but around him we get to know the other reporters and correspondents, as they all resist the mechanical demands of the medium, the tinny sound of canned stuff, and the smooth talk of lobbyist gab. News is history, and needs to be treated as such: with an historian's care, dignity, thoughtfulness, sincerity and commitment.

I AM CONVINCED, therefore, that no consideration of fundamental structures of broadcasting can be safely or usefully confined to national limits. What the BBC (public) and ITV (commercial) are capable of in Britain has no necessary implications for what US TV (commercial) or German TV (public) are actually accomplishing—and, in our own case, not accomplishing at all—for the public interest. My experience in Germany has led me to the conclusion that our "*öffentlich-rechtliches System*", restricted as it is by a paralysing network of laws and regulations, with a built-in political-party control, does not serve us well. Only persons of talent and ability—call them "personalities", or not, as you will—can be expected to produce broadcasts of quality. Our own system militates against the outstanding, the individual, the strong-minded, the men and women of spirit and originality. It feels safe with mediocrity. It wants only technicians.

Only on a few occasions—such a one was the Holocaust series, which it inherited by sheer accident and luck from the Americans—does it prove itself up to its large responsibilities and opportunities. But I can assure you that since then we have returned, in our stable, affluent, West German fashion, to the "sleep of the just", napping at the news, slumbering through the shows, dozing through all the dangers of a dangerous time.

Peter von Zahn

are so by virtue of some official public function—for as private individuals, depending on their particular temperament, they are as cheerful and full of the joys of life as the bulk of their less prominent compatriots.

Pride of place among them must go to the high policy-making functionaries. In proportion to the size of its population, the Federal Republic can boast an extraordinarily large number of professional politicians in comparison with other countries: people who live for and by politics, are relatively highly paid, and are devoted to retaining their posts at all costs. In the Federal government, as in the various states and municipalities, with armies of ministers, state-secretaries, deputies, representatives and councillors, the old type of the amateur or part-time politician is almost extinct. A politician's mandate remains the focal point of his existence even when he continues to follow a private profession, since his success is in the main linked to his political presence. The mandataries share an identical pattern of solemn portentous behaviour in public (although at the level of local politics it is somewhat more relaxed). Immediately they are elected they assume the combined role of guru and taskmaster to every citizen; they urge and admonish him with strict warnings to do his duty; they call upon him to act responsibly—that is to say, to give his assent, which is not the same as his active support. Every day the citizen is forcibly reminded of his electoral duties, so that he may use his vote in accordance with the wishes of those in power.

One of the chief instruments employed in German politics is the permanent simulation of a

state of emergency. "The situation has never been more serious (*Die Lage war noch nie so ernst*)", the first Chancellor was wont to exclaim, and his successors have all followed Dr Adenauer's example with a similar turn of phrase. This appeal to a state of crisis—warning people against it, threatening them with it—is a keyword in the stabilisation of political power. It has become inherent in the official ritual of the state: even the calendar acknowledges no cheerful occasions. The German people eagerly celebrate as many festivities as possible, from the Munich *Oktoberfest* to the Hamburger *Dom*, the Dürkheimer *Wurstmarkt* and the Rhineland *Karneval*, official holiday or no; but the German state celebrates more state funerals and national days of mourning than the rest of the inhabited world put together. The only national holiday, the 17th of June (marking the abortive one-day revolt in East Germany in 1953), can hardly be celebrated properly; the other anniversaries observed by the state are occasions of mourning, remembrance, and solemn reflection—the 20th of July, the 18th of August, *der Volkstrauertag*. Every other nation has at least one day in the year when it celebrates itself; but not the West Germans. Positive occasions, such as the centenary celebrations of the Bismarck *Reich* in 1971 or the 30th anniversary of the post-War Republic, are forgotten or merely marked by meaningless speeches in the Bonn *Bundeshaus*.

The same is true of the public role of the Army, which in all other countries commemorates festive national occasions with parades and military bands. Not so with us. Officially, the strongest conventional military force in the West does not exist at all; it is less in evidence than the police or the fire brigade; it only appears briefly as an escort at the reception of foreign guests-of-state, and the obligatory wreath-laying ceremony at the war memorial in the Bonn *Stadtgarten*. Its own ceremonies, the great military tattoos, are internal affairs. The displays of its great military bands take place abroad, not on the soil which it is supposed to defend. It has not yet learned to parade in front of its own people.



LUTHER

IT IS ONLY TO BE EXPECTED that political parties with a stranglehold on the state apparatus will behave correspondingly as a social force. They cooperate in forming the Will of the People (as prescribed by the laws of the constitution, in something of an understatement) but would prefer to be that Will themselves. Aided by the chronic nature of electoral campaigning in our octopus-tentacled political system, and thanks above all to their tight grip on the public-sector national media (radio, television), they have little trouble in achieving this. They swamp the country with a daily output of

bulletins of overwhelmingly cheerless character. Each new event, each utterance of the various other parties, is accompanied by a critical running commentary in the curious hope that this, together with live TV transmissions from the *Bundestag*, will woo the ordinary citizen. The substance of their comments is concerned always with abuses and grievances—those for which others are to blame, and those which they claim they will remedy themselves.

All is changed, of course, when the awful moment of truth draws near, and contact with ordinary citizens is not merely extolled as a theoretical principle but actually has to be put into practice—before Election Day. Official confidence is magically restored and boldly brought into line with the true base of general feeling, under the expert guidance of our best advertising agencies. High spirits quickly appear in the precincts of power, with free beer and “Hurrah for Hesse!”, balloons for the children, and the reassuring cry: “Germans, You can be Proud of Your Country!” At long last those who have no power are told they can look forward to quite astonishing improvements in their lives—after the election is won. The future is suddenly a rosy promise.

After Election Day, however, all is immediately darkened by those recurring *miere Probleme*. Official *tristesse* takes over once more. Even during the few happy high-points of the post-War period, when Germans united in an upsurge of some national feeling—at winning the World Soccer Championship in 1954 (when the German national anthem rang out again for the first time abroad), at the efficient liberation of the hijacked *Lufthansa* plane by a German anti-terrorist squad in Mogadishu—the leading opinion-makers refused to follow the tide of public opinion. Officialdom found such enthusiasm embarrassing; it was played down, kept low-key, and shrugged off in an act of prudent statesmanship. Enthusiasm is almost as dangerous as revolution.

THE CHURCHES, too, play their part in clogging the public atmosphere of the Federal Republic. The Protestant Church, which voices the ethos of sin in our society to a far greater extent than the Catholic Church, has for centuries been more closely in touch with the *Zeitgeist*; and immediately after the Second World War became the main spokesman for right and proper thinking. Since the “Declaration of Guilt” in Stuttgart in 1945, far from ever being caught bearing glad tidings it has not missed a single opportunity to call the German people to repentance and reform—and this, at least in the political sphere, was thoroughly effected. Nowadays the Church has the air of a sort of eternal Good Friday (which can be explained in theological terms, in that the Crucifixion, is an

indisputable fact, whereas the Resurrection is not, so that the promises of the Gospel are proclaimed to the flock in subdued pastel tones). Joyous Christian festivals, such as Easter or Christmas, have been moralised into insignificance by our German Protestantism. The dangers of Atomic Power and the virtues of Aid to the Third World are its most popular themes, together with a call for ascetic caution in safeguarding national interests. A bad conscience about the world has been instilled into Christians in the name of good citizenship; tight-lipped, cheerless despondency, wallowing in malaise, is evoked by the spirit of sacrifice. The Catholic Church has a smaller share in all this, since German Catholicism is part of a supranational church. It still has a greater resistance to the atmosphere of the contemporary milieu, and has survived the *aggiornamento* of the Second Vatican Council without conspicuous damage. All the same, from being *ecclesia militans*, it too has become *ecclesia clamans*. Lamenting the corruption of the age, which has always been one of its tasks, now seems to be its only mission. In keeping with this we now have a quite different type

The Nazi Past

Bayreuth



side of the Nazi regime.

THE American TV series, “Holocaust”, was the cause of a deep change in German currents of opinion, according to experts of the Centre for Political Education. A number of public opinion surveys have indicated (Dr Ernst Tillmann of the University of Bayreuth, reports) that the German people are now more fully aware of the dark

For decades the notions of “building highways (Autobahnen)” and “safeguarding law and order” were in the forefront of awareness of the Hitler régime, and this has now declined. Even a year-and-a-half after the widely-seen TV film, there is a tendency to be increasingly negative about the National-Socialist epoch. This is also reflected in a change of attitudes towards “Reparation payments”, involving a greater sense of responsibility towards anti-Semitism (a decline), and towards the felt need for information about the crimes of the Nazi régime (greater).

Evidently the “Holocaust” series, despite certain justified criticisms of its documentation and film techniques, has provided a balance to the so-called nostalgia of the Hitler-Welle and a counter-force to certain neo-Nazi revivals.

FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG

of Church leader—no longer jolly, earthy, popular characters larger than life, but men endowed with the administrative talents to be reliable board chairmen of a religious corporation, even though they are still called bishops or archbishops.

IN ALL THESE WINTERS of our discontent, we must not forget the trade unions. They, of course, enjoy the advantage of not having to rely on the stirring power of words and rhetoric; they control a power-base of their own. Still, they need to play a part in shaping official public opinion in order to retain that control and even extend it. They derive their authority from the real or alleged dissatisfaction of their members; they sedulously monitor social evils for the good of their organisation. It is unthinkable for a trade union to declare itself completely satisfied—that would be tantamount to self-liquidation. The trade unions must articulate discontent, and occasionally even produce it, or at least foster and encourage it. But they must also subdue it, tranquillise it; their responsible role in the social process requires this. There are compensations for assuming such responsibility, sometimes intangible rewards, such as the praise of other responsible bodies or (for renouncing inflationary wage policies, for example) an increase in power through “worker participation.” An organisation like the trade unions, geared

to making demands, cannot be popular; its whole ethos is one of irksomeness. It may not stride out in military fashion, but at least it is always in the public eye with its grumpy concern.

I must also mention the unions’ social counterpart. For the most part the employers, rather than influencing public sentiments, are merely influenced by them. Like all merchants down the centuries, they do not want to admit that they are doing well; and their clamour for tax relief or for subsidies is raised as far as possible in the antechambers of power, not in the open forum. In any case they consider it inopportune publicly to display any sign of a joyful emotion. Our society finds it hard to dispense with such sedulously cultivated gloominess.

THE MEDIA are likewise vehicles and creators of public gloom. The officially sanctioned electronic media, backed by public and private finance, cannot avoid this function, since they are invincibly controlled by the political manipulators of public sentiment. Thus we are, for example, able to enjoy the very special German treat (especially at weekends) of 10-to-15-minute TV news programmes which have no factual content whatsoever (apart from weather forecasts), but consist merely of one party stolidly responding to another, or of all of them formally replying to an official statement of the *BDI*, the *BDA*, or the *DGB*. This sort of gaseous self-advertising would be unthinkable if the various controllers of the officially-sanctioned media were not there to see that their own favoured statements receive full consideration. With “equal time” against “equal time”, their output pretty much cancels itself out, and we could probably do without the whole thing altogether.

The fact that the media themselves do much to increase the general melancholy has causes which lie in a specifically German tradition. It may be that these causes have such immediate effect and meet with so little resistance because in Germany official cheerfulness can be administered only in small doses and can hardly be procured by a mere act of will. At present most of the broadcast material just about satisfies the demands of an average audience which is growing older all the time, but it no longer satisfies the younger or more educated sections of the community or those who are actually responsible for making the programmes. I suspect that even the creative programme-makers who work in these great publicity machines have merely succumbed to the temptation to turn the problems and vexations of their own private existence into television plays and documentaries, unloading their own working day on to the free time of others. Thus one gets countless dreary programmes in which the medium analyses its very own problems and pompously throws them open for discussion.



WAGNER

Of Pedagogues & Preachers

SO MUCH FOR the inventory of phenomena— and beyond *Phänomene*, in Goethe's memorable warning, it may not be possible for us to look: for they themselves are the instructive lesson. Consider a few examples from the murky depths of history.

It is, I believe, typical of our German nation that it is the most theologically obsessed in the whole of Christendom. Denominational conflict has raged ever since the first major rift in the Church, and our nation has been moulded by theology to an extreme degree, forming the basis for the development of some of the greatest philosophy in the Western world but also sowing the tragic seeds of a tendency to express ourselves in ideological terms and rather to disdain what might be called autonomous thinking. One could exaggerate and say that the German people has been garotted by theology ever since the Thirty Years' War. Even on his death-bed Melanchthon lamented the *rabies theologorum*—because they were convinced of the absolute truth of their positions, theologians argued among themselves with peculiar vigour and vehemence, at the expense of normal social courtesies. Such strength of conviction is lacking nowadays, but something of the *rabies theologorum* still remains in the social and

ideological relations of Germans among themselves. With us every problem can easily be transformed into a question of principle, and raised to the level of conscience and conviction.

This has certain practical advantages. It makes vigorous argument a great deal easier, and scheduled confrontations can take place without the need to exercise any sort of rational judgment. But it also leads naturally to the mutual condemnation that is inevitable in ideological hostilities, and if one half of the nation is accustomed to reject the other half as a matter of course, the relations of the various parties can scarcely offer a pleasant or encouraging spectacle. At the same time, this mental tradition means that no autonomy of political thought has ever really been able to take deep root in our country. We tend either to be Faustian strivers for virtue, or conversely (and no wiser) Machiavellian power-politicians. It all amounts to a Manichaeism of the non-political, of the nightly *Stammtisch*, of the youth hostel, of the *Reichstag*.

In his day, Bismarck merely thought and acted exactly like every other ambitious European statesman of the century. The Germans turned him either into a Siegfried or, latterly, into the epitome of the cold calculating *Realpolitiker* who did what seemed most advantageous at any given moment—and in our eyes today such a course of action is

WHY VIET NAM?

Prelude to America's Albatross

ARCHIMEDES L.A. PATTI

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morally suspect. The assessment of political interests necessarily involves calculating the interest of one's friends and enemies; it requires more intellectual effort, more rational judgment, than are ever to be found in the sort of moralising to which our political thinking is prone. Especially since the collapse of the National Socialist régime, justly regarded as amoral, we believe we can substitute ethical culture for politics in general; and this moralising peculiarly corresponds to the didactic and pedantic strain in German intellectual history.

POLITICAL THOUGHT is dependent on particular situations; it lends itself uneasily to declarations of principle. But any gifted teacher will try to search the morass of existing facts for the firm guide-ropes which enable him to grope forward; and for this, moral principles constitute a vastly more reliable alternative than political insights. With us, in the last analysis, the whole didactic element forms a constituent part of public life, and our educators are accorded a status which is not often found in other countries and cultures. There are direct consequences: with us, for example, morality can be preached by absolutely anyone, not merely by those officially or spiritually qualified to do so; and the *Schuldfrage*, the question of Guilt, is always the first to be discussed, long before any sort of causality has been established. And so, in our country, official debate has been thrown open to those who regard teaching as their main profession. Nobody needs to point out the respectable standing of the teacher and the academic. But are we aware of the effects of the great educational reforms that have taken place since the beginning of this century? They are considerable—and yet all the literary testimonials on the theme of “a happy childhood” stem from the epoch prior to these reforms. The introduction of compulsory state education, the abolition even of private preparatory schools, has gone hand in hand with the misfortune of being unable to view childhood as a happy experience.

It is, however, not only the endeavours of educational reformers which have permanently influenced the public mood of the German people. Many other professions, by no means socially powerless, nowadays (thanks to their not exactly overwhelming yet substantially increased numbers) dread being regarded as socially superfluous; and therefore cite as a social credential their rush to judgment, dashing into print in a constant stir of public discussion. This is true of theologians (who are usually not practising ministers), of psychologists and sociologists, of their cousins the psychiatrists. It is, of course, also true of journalists—in short, all those areas of the so-called tertiary sector which have no natural responsibilities and

therefore ride on the back of empty clichés and flatulent generalisations with intellectual energy and determination; for nothing must bar their way.

GERMANY, once renowned as the country of *freiwilligen Hilfspolizisten*, of voluntary constables, is now an embarrassing pedagogical province, in which almost everyone lectures everybody else about almost everything. To be sure, this involves division of labour. Ideally, those who deal with sex murders should be celibate; those who tell parents how to bring up their children should have none of their own; road-safety authorities must be chauffeur-driven; employers tell bureaucrats what to do, and are in turn told off by their bankers.

I must mention briefly a second German tradition; it may seem less obvious to us today, but it is still there behind the scenes. Once upon a time we had a *Bürgertum* which, in contrast to most nations in the West, rose to power as a bourgeoisie only after it had passed its zenith. In its heyday it was not the ruling class. Ever since those days the German bourgeoisie has retained a certain remoteness from reality, which expresses itself in a variety of forms, and not least in the crystallisation of Party politics. Thus a liberal party like the *FDP* essentially owes its effectiveness on a whole spectrum of issues to the fact that in the middle classes we have at our disposal an inexhaustible fund of non-political thinking. Just as *vin rosé* offers an alternative for the wine-drinker who cannot quite decide between red and white, so we have a political grouping which, in a kind of superior form of abstention, can be joined by those who have not themselves adopted any position on questions awaiting resolution, yet who do not wish to be seen to be non-committal.

Nor is this all. Another factor is the idealisation of the *Jünglingsgestalt*, the figure of the Youth in German cultural history. Naturally I imply no discrimination on the value of the different ages of man. In Germany, as elsewhere, old age has been revered; in this respect we are surely no different from other nations; and today, when reverence and esteem for old age are disappearing, we still swim with the general tide. There are reasons for this—though they may not be particularly civilised reasons.

The figure of the German Youth has a literary epiphany which a few key names may suggest: Kleist, Hölderlin, early German Romanticism, the influence of that general Romantic outlook which in our country cut short the Enlightenment so prematurely. The Youth was the successful personification of an ideal of purity which expressed itself in philosophical terms from Kant and Schiller onwards; we can even find traces of it in the First World War. One need only think of that

youthful flourishing generation who, with a copy of *Faust* or *Zarathustra* in their kitbags, laid down their lives at Langemarck. The ideal of those who were alienated from life, who distanced themselves from reality, was the image of a Youth who embodied innocence and purity. It is perhaps consistent with this tradition that Germans today now recognise themselves in another figure, although there is nothing youthful about him, merely something not quite grown-up:—"Michel", the little German who cannot find his way around in the real world, and whose main characteristic is a dreamy naivety. Basically he would like to be in harmony with himself, but he cannot synchronise his private with his public emotions. *Der deutsche Michel* is not so easily inclined to a saving cynicism as in other national cultures, he cannot simply pretend that public matters are of no concern. In him we may identify, although it is gradually diminishing, the German inability to respond to political disappointments with anything but a sense of outrage and indignation. When something goes wrong in our country, one rarely hears it dismissed with a casual "That's-the-way-it-goes" or "What-else-can-you-expect?..." The obligatory reaction is: outrage and indignation.

Nevertheless, one does sense some incipient disengagement. For example, magazines, newspapers, the electronic media (and politicians and

parliaments as well) can for weeks-on-end carry on quite happily about various scandalous developments. One side attempts to play down the situation, the other tries to make too much of it, although the public at large has already resigned itself long since, regarding it all as merely part of the political circus and simply not worth the trouble of getting excited. This kind of resistance to scandal did not exist in Germany twenty or thirty years ago. There really has been something of a hardening educational process in the general public. Politicians continue to blow their tops in the debating chamber; but this does not meet with anyone's approval, being merely a kind of theatre with rather less drama than a third-division football-match.

"We are all guilty"

THE "LEGACY" OF NATIONAL SOCIALISM is an important element, and is to a certain extent the very basis of the general atmosphere of official gloom and despondent public opinion. There is no need to dwell at length on what has become a cliché of all Western publicists; confessions of guilt and declarations of repentance belong to the ritual of German politics. Every German on his first visit to the White House is expected to express his gratitude for the Marshall Plan (forgotten long ago by the rest of the world), even though the West

GEORGE ORWELL



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German Occupied Zone took only seventh place on the list of priorities. The value of the aid given under the Marshall Plan (it was a great humanitarian gesture as well as a politically intelligent act) is in no way diminished by the fact that the sums expended were no greater than the ten-year gross profits which the Ford Motor Company in Cologne was able to transfer back to the mother company in the USA.

Naturally, those who make public confessions of guilt are seldom speaking of themselves. They gather round them, uninvited, numerous penitents and fellow-sinners for whom they act as spokesmen who themselves have already been absolved. There are certain shining examples of this kind of behaviour. Even such an esteemed personage as Hitler's Armaments Minister, Albert Speer, used this technique when he emerged from Spandau after serving his 20-year sentence. His protracted show of penitence was as public as it was discreet, and he immediately acquired the status of a moral representative for the Nuremberg war-criminals. Believe me, it is not inconceivable to imagine him as an honorary citizen of Jerusalem, or at work (imaginative architect that he is) on colossal plans for the reconstruction of the Temple of Solomon. The image of our late President, Gustav Heinemann, was characterised by an outward show of guilt and repentance precisely because as an anti-Nazi he was not obliged to transcend a culpable personal past. (Germans thought they could detect traces of moral despondency when he appeared in public; in private he was different, although his high spirits were sometimes tempered with sarcasm.)

In complete contrast was Dr Eugen Gerstenmaier, once a great mentor on the Bonn scene; and I recall one highly characteristic remark of his. We should be "ashamed that German troops are once again taking part in an invasion of Czechoslovakia", he told us with a deep sigh when the Warsaw Pact states ended the "Prague Spring." This time they were the troops of the *Volksarmee* of the Communist East German state; but the customary reaction of quick guilt and instant shame had been triggered like a reflex when we heard the words "German invasion."¹

¹ Among our respected dignitaries, as far as the mechanism of guilt, atonement, and shame is concerned, *Bundespräsident* Walter Scheel has, in the public mind, enjoyed a successful period in office, perhaps because he has known how to combine a rather less intense attitude to morality with a nevertheless firm judgment of the past. How his successor, Dr Carstens, will get on remains to be seen. He appears not to be sticking his neck out in either direction, but applies himself to his office as the *Tenyo* does in Japan: he is present at all official functions, conducting himself with dignity; and beyond that is simply the instrument of constitutional law, though perhaps more unassuming than a President of the Republic ought to be.

The Pretence of Parity

ADMITTEDLY, this disparity between private contentment and public malaise is not peculiar to our country. It is a growing problem, I suppose, in all highly-developed industrial states which are organised on a mass-democratic basis. Possibly it has something to do with the celebrated loss of our father- and mother-figures, for democracy is the one form of government which does not retain them. It offers the heart and mind fewer images to which they can hold and from which they can draw inspiration—thus leaving space for a quick turnover of highly variable and inevitably mediocre personalities at the top. No monarch; no court with an aristocratic etiquette; nothing to catch the imagination.

More than that, the pretence that rulers and ruled are all on the same level plays a significant role in mass democracies. Since the rise of liberalism, we have gladly adopted Rousseau's idea that the governors are no different from the governed, being merely elected for a time as functionaries to carry out the business of government "by, of, and for the people." This is even taught in school. In reality, however, the citizen finds a different state of affairs when as a motorist he is stopped by a policeman, when as a tax-payer the inspectors pay him an official visit, or when he has to turn up as a witness or a defendant in court. At every moment—except that one moment when he casts his vote—he is aware, as under every other form of government, of that problematic distinction (relieving him of one burden, while saddling him with another) between those who are subject to power and those who wield it... and it is inconceivable that things can be different. No nation provides political self-service; the deep difference between governors and governed is not to be denied. Democracy's great advantage is that periodically the governors are relieved of power at the wishes of the governed, and are summarily replaced by others. But since democracy never ceases to idealise a spurious identity between the two, the governed have difficulty in recognising themselves in the utterances of the governors, and cannot divest themselves of vague feelings of uneasiness and betrayal.

In societies with an authoritarian leadership, though these may be corrupt forms of "mass democracy" like Fascist or Communist dictatorships, there can be no public mood of discontent. The totality of public space is occupied by a form of political power which will brook no criticism of its conditions from moaners, groaners, and carping *Miesmacher*. Every day, in every way, an era of good feeling obtains, wedding national pride to inflexible confidence in the wisdom of the governors. Society must be content; the unhappiness of individuals (indeed of the national

majority), which the hapless rulers have themselves induced, remains private and must never be openly shown. A rule of thumb: no modern nation which displays itself in public as permanently in happy harmony with itself can be regarded as free.

ONE DISTRESSING ASPECT of all mass democracies is the promises of reform through which modern politicians must seek to prove themselves. It is not beyond possibility (if there are further *débâcles* of political reformism) that one day someone will stand for election with the slogan: "*It is the citizen's inalienable right to be left in peace!*" Gaetano Mosca once jested that no one could conduct an election campaign on the platform of "Vote-for-me-so-that-I-can-be-rich-and-happy." There are no electoral victories that way. In years gone by it would also have been considered futile for a politician to stand up and say, "Elect me and I will leave you in peace for four years"; and today it is still not quite possible. But sometimes it seems that we are heading for a situation where anyone who simply promised not to introduce great and fundamental reforms—rather, simply to enact as few laws as possible, to appear on our television screens once a month (at most), to convene no large rallies (and not provoke his opponents to convene any)—might have a real chance of a landslide victory.

At the moment, democratic politics justifies itself by promising to do things "differently", to change us and everything round us while of course maintaining stability. Such promises of reform are rarely kept, though the politicians act in good faith even if they never get around to renouncing their intentions. Thus we are trapped in an immemorial dialectic of hope and disappointment, which, like the wages-prices spiral, increases expectations by repeated pledges, leading inevitably to failure and the onset of public dissatisfaction. This is the practice of government by the principle of hope. It is all very unpromising.

A FINAL CHARACTERISTIC of mass democracy is the public influence of envy. By this I mean not so much the old division of political parties devised by Alexander Herzen, where there is supposedly always one party of greed and one party of envy. Suffice it that envy represents one of the components in the behavioural pattern of mass democracies. Envy is mightier than greed. People can readily be organised to receive more subsidies, but only with difficulty when it comes to having to pay taxes; conversely, they can easily be organised as factory-based producers, hardly at all as high-street consumers. It is always easier for those who are envious to organise themselves, far more than it

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is for those who wish to defend what is being left of their worldly goods.

In the first energy crisis of 1973, when non-motoring Sundays were introduced, we could experience for ourselves the significance of envy and the struggle for effective (not merely nominal) equality. No longer could one person do what another could not afford. Here, too, is the secret fascination of those little post-War ration-books which we have not beheld for some 35 years now. The conventional wisdom of market economists—that, if the oil crisis were to worsen, consumption ceilings could be regulated by the price of petrol—can be taken to be false. If a referendum were held, I suspect there would be a majority in favour of rationing. Linked with this is an especial regard for the principle of achievement, *das Leistungsprinzip*, which has retained an unassailable importance in Germany, no matter what objections Left-liberal reform propaganda attempts to raise against it. The “achievement principle”, in the form in which it prevails in our busy Germany, owes far more to the medieval guild than to the modern corporation: high levels of achievement are not attained solely through material incentives. Another principle is also at work here, what Arnold Gehlen called *die prinzipielle Ordentlichkeit der Deutschen*, the basic thoroughness of the orderly Germans: pride in doing something so efficiently that one can be pleased with oneself. Simply relying on wage increases (and the like) guarantees neither achievement nor social satisfaction.

Dissatisfaction can, of course, be mobilised; but it can only go so far. The trade unions run up against these frontiers when they cling single-mindedly to the idea of unlimited wage increases. When people talk about our *Gewerkschaften* you always hear the phrase “worker participation”, *Mitbestimmung*. When the concept is used in its most general sense it stands not only for “co-determination” and quasi-parity in industry, but also for the introduction of consultant and advisory bodies in practically all professions, and at every level. Do these innovations contribute anything to an improvement in the mood of the nation?

Such mechanisms may succeed in making the great conflicts disappear, but in fact they merely dissolve into a host of smaller conflicts felt acutely on a personal level. Since no one is now empowered to make decisions, a prolonged palaver ensues among all those entitled to negotiate; this not only consumes endless time, but also drains the reservoir of goodwill with which the average man goes to his place of work in the morning. A social state of affairs where everyone has a say in everything, where everyone can interrupt everyone else, produces not great or terrible conflicts but a mass of small frictions which cannot be disregarded and which cause the general social climate to deteriorate: instead of a cloudburst, a perpetual drizzle.

Self-Defence of Stoicism

A SIGNIFICANT FACTOR in the miseries of our public philosophy can be seen in the counter-mechanism operating among those threatened by the general morose atmosphere: namely, a highly effective process of self-exoneration. This occurs because, although public gloom is obvious and is recognised as unpleasant, it need not necessarily be a personal moral burden. It is only part of the grey everyday.

One would imagine that, given the public gloom dispensed by our television and radio communicators, in the end there would be little else for people to do but pick up some good book, or revert to the vaunted benefits of family conversation (although, observing elderly couples in our cafés with nothing to say to one another, I suspect this was really no livelier in earlier centuries). But they hardly ever do so. Does the blame lie with them, or with our modern literature? The important works of contemporary German literature which have been acclaimed in the post-War period can, I feel, only be called products of the new anti-realism. They have made no attempt to depict the reality of an affluent nation like the Federal Republic, but merely angrily resent it. No matter whether it's Günter Grass (pleasant, readable, accessible), or the personally likeable Heinrich Böll (for whom the word *Miesmacher* would have to be invented if it didn't already exist), the fact remains that the whole of this literature has tended to represent the darkness-at-noon of everyday prosperity.

Confronted by this critical literature, what do the Germans do? They buy it by the cartload. Heinrich Böll is one of the most widely-read authors of our day, and certainly has many more books in print than any writer naive enough to express himself positively about the way we live now. The Germans, I can only conclude, want to find in their literature the misery they believe they really deserve. Gloom spices the enjoyment of affluence. After the ruinous defeat of World War II, such a social-aesthetic reaction is not incomprehensible. German literature has a kind of cathartic effect, as does the public melancholy in general: people enjoy their good fortune and go on to read Grass and Böll.

THERE IS ONE FURTHER very curious German paradox, which I can only call *den Hass gegen die heile Welt*, or our hatred of a “more perfect world.” Since there cannot be perfection here on earth, desire for it would be pure heresy. But those who denigrate the idea that our world has been improved in the last thirty years are not by any means orthodox theologians; they are, rather, our utopians and revolutionaries. One would expect

any hatred of social betterment (which our progressive sociology presents as an "anti-conservative" tendency) to be directed against utopias. This is not at all the case, for the strange phantoms of their alternative abstractions continue to be pursued. Perhaps the polemical attacks directed against worldly ameliorations are basically intended for the world itself, as it is now and ever will be. Certainly, those who launch the attacks never do admit that what they really hate is their own bitter disenchantment.

I found this confirmed from a different angle by the strange fact that a sober and sceptical conservative like the former Foreign Minister, Dr Gerhard Schröder, could write a book with the title *Um die heile Welt*. He meant quite naively that the Federal Republic of Germany at the time of Chancellor Erhard's cabinet (of which he was a member) was this whole and healthy world, and from that point on it was only a question of maintaining the *status quo*. Curiously, those who despise the way we live now, and want to change everything utterly, think in a similar way. They identify present reality and its acceptance with something ultimate and final, and make a new utopia in the mirror of their alienation. The conventional assumption that Socialism of the Left has a basically optimistic picture of the world, Conservatism of the Right a basically pessimistic picture, is thus rendered less plausible; in practice not much optimism has been seen in socialism since the October Revolution.

A PART FROM THIS PROCESS of self-exoneration, there are other protections against the intrusion of public gloom via the electronic media, the newspapers, the speeches of every politician who wields power, authority, or opinion. One of these defences is the German return to ideas of local heritage and folklore.

For several years now, the idea of "*Heimat*" has been gaining once again in social prestige, and even our small towns and villages have busied themselves with roots and origins. But it is being taken to extremes when the inhabitants of Recklinghausen cling to their pedestrian walk-about precinct (which looks exactly like the pedestrian precinct in Bottrop, or anywhere else) as if it were some ancient organic part of their traditional local heritage. The rediscovery of dialects—linguistic phenomena which true friends-of-language take to be little more than decayed jargon—forms part of this revival. Written German serves as the language of public manipulators, and people protect themselves from its coercion by joining a circle which does not speak that language. This reinforcing of the private sphere carries over into some surprising areas. I do not mean long lonely walks in

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the forest in the fashion of Ernst Jünger, but rather the new social institution, the Discothèque, which is so important to great hordes of adolescents. In the discothèque no speeches are heard, no TV sets flicker, no persons of public note introduced, and verbal contact is totally replaced by tactile communication (which happens to be completely useless for the purposes of mass manipulation). In this connection, I think those who are struggling to preserve the non-private system of German radio are fighting a losing battle. Those who champion the claim that for the electronic media a publicly-owned monopoly is the only democratically, socially, and morally legitimate system, worry that the German atmosphere could be "depoliticised" even further. It is quite obvious why they wish to keep open their public channel of agitated gloom into all our private living-rooms.

Out of all this emerges a certain dualistic consciousness, rooted in a basic philosophy which can perhaps best be described as vulgar stoicism. It is difficult to make out what a nation like the Germans really believes today (there are similar difficulties with other peoples and nations). But this probably no longer matters very much, provided that people maintain their moral code intact (even without benefit of a belief in the hereafter). This kind of plain man's stoicism reminds me of Lichtenberg's phrase, "Neither deny nor believe (*Weder leugnen noch glauben*)" and of Confucius' recommendation: "Honour the gods, and stay well away from them. . . ."



NIETZSCHE

One takes one's responsibilities as a citizen seriously, does one's duty to one's neighbour and towards one's own family; one respects what is said publicly by those in authority without taking it literally or making it an article of faith. So today a growing number of people have a kind of liberal social conscience, but no real relationship to the corresponding political parties. There are good Catholics who feel no real necessity to go to Mass or even to follow to the letter the moral teachings of the Church—an attitude which is more understandable in the Protestant sphere where choice has always been more free. This dualistic consciousness is not aware of its dichotomy; it merely draws a line between types of social role-playing. Perhaps the cult of the Emperor in Ancient Rome provides a parallel; and a similar situation could develop among us now. People "salute the Gessler hats" that are all around us, but at the same time do not acknowledge their authority, either with approval or with antipathy. Wilhelm Tell is forgotten; authority is a fact of social life, and a trivial one at that. It is merely part of the way things are. It may even be a necessity when times are difficult; but identification with it goes no further than that.

Under the Mask

LET ME TRY to sum up. That peevishness, that hollow gravity, that false hierarchy of dignitaries who make up the great public façade, with its constant discussion of illusory problems and its ceaseless attempts to claim support from the citizen—all this does much more than permit the man-in-the-street to cultivate his private contentment (and salve his guilty conscience by passing the buck to those in authority). There are other, and incalculable, consequences. In actual fact, our country does not suffer at all from the grievous problems that are persistently projected in public. It has quite different problems, of an existential character, which in the din created by daily discussion of unreal issues remain concealed. No utopian ideal carries prestige any longer, no basic reform has a clear objective—but the great public machine constantly churns out plans and projects, a loose-leaf collection of supposedly soluble crises, and creates the illusion (taken seriously by those in positions of responsibility as well as those subject to their authority) that this country has a standpoint, a political awareness, and a vision of the future.

Burdened with the melancholy tasks of official business, faced with the dour seriousness which distorts everything in public life as the nation confronts its problems, no one will take on the responsibility of asking the relevant questions about what really lies before us. In fact these are

completely ignored. There *are* reasons for despair, and they are not only those which contemporary literature sets before us. There are reasons for the gravest doubts, but they do not appear in *Bundestag* speeches, in political manifestos, or on television talk-shows.

If one could at long last compel these people to discuss the most urgent and burning issues, would any of them really believe that the status of an isolated, divided Berlin could be maintained for the next thirty years as it has been for the last thirty? Is our feeble imagination really fertile enough to conceive that the partition of Germany and Europe, with American troops on this side, Soviet troops on the other, will continue indefinitely? Does anyone, apart from the generation which consumed its fine energies in post-War reconstruction, believe that an answer will be found for "the national question" if it is simply left on the table? Not to mention those global questions which have pressed us for so long, and are skirted round year-after-year at summit after summit.

Our Germany is not a land like all the others. It is itself its own problem—and a problem it will not

attend to. It would seem that the loss of a third of the old *Reich's* territories (and the subsequent partition) has left behind not even a twinge of residual pain, as if the scars of War and the Nazi régime have been covered by the plasters of reparation, guilt, and confession of repentance. Permit me to doubt this. It may be that, without admitting it, we go about wearing a thin half-mask, even when we try to look at ourselves in the mirror. On our head is Michel's night-cap, the cap of a political dwarf reconciled to his own diminutive status. It remains to be seen whether others will always take this mask for our real face. Perhaps, in the course of time, the mask will adhere. But the day may come when someone lifts the mask, or removes it completely. The face that appears may be less full-cheeked and rosy than today's, and clouded by something other than the miseries of a lack of public equanimity.

So long as we wear the mask, we remain hidden and continue to conceal our situation even from ourselves. In the last analysis, it will not be a question of melancholy versus good cheer, but of lies and of silence.

Stopover

A stinking judder; then a pall of steam.
Excuse me, I'm afraid. . . . Oh no sir
No chance of that today we'll need
To send out for spare parts
Depends whether we've got a mechanic
Handy tomorrow couldn't say
There could be one the bus station's
Beyond the roundabout leave us the key.

But not my luggage. In the phone box
No directory. In the baker's
Sliced bread only. Spitting rain.
The church is locked. The elderly lady
At the depot's deaf, my bladder's bursting.
On Thursday one bus this is Thursday
And that left hours ago. The Plough's
Booked up. Try the Blue Boar (well named).

But a room they have. It smells too small.
A deep-freeze dinner, TV sport,
Comedy and Petunia Newton-Clark.
Or autocar mags. Seasonal travellers
Absorb the chairs, guffaw. But a book's
In the lounge; and that is how I took
To bed my first and only Barbara
Cartland and discovered love is all.

Glen Cavaliero

U. A. Fanthorpe

Getting it across

(for Caroline)

*"His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb.
Now are we sure that thou knowest all things." St John, 16, 29–30*

This is the hard thing.
Not being God, the Son of Man,
—I was born for that part—
But patiently incising on these yokel faces,
Mystified, bored and mortal,
The vital mnemonics they never remember.

There is enough of Man in my God
For me to construe their frowns. I feel
The jaw-cracking yawns they try to hide
When out I come with one of my old
Chestnuts. *Christ! not that bloody
Sower again, they are saying, or God!
Not the Prodigal fucking Son.
Give us a new one, for Messiah's sake.*

They know my unknowable parables as well
As each other's shaggy dog stories.
*I say! I say! I say! There was this Samaritan,
This Philistine and this Roman . . . or
What did the high priest say
To the belly dancer? All they need
Is the cue for laughs. My sheep and goats,
Virgins, pigs, figtrees, loaves and lepers
Confuse them. Fishing, whether for fish or men,
Has unfitted them for analogy.*

Yet these are my mouths. Through them only
Can I speak with Augustine, Aquinas, Martin, Paul,
Regius Professors of Divinity,
And you, and you.
How can I cram the sense of Heaven's kingdom
Into our pidgin-Aramaic quayside jargon?

I envy Moses, who could choose
The diuturnity of stone for waymarks
Between man and Me. He broke the tablets,
Of course. I too know the easy messages
Are the ones not worth transmitting;
But he could at least carve.
The prophets too, however luckless
Their lives and instructions, inscribed on wood,
Papyrus, walls, their jaundiced oracles.

I alone must write on flesh. Not even
The congenial face of my Baptist cousin,
My crooked affinity Judas, who understands,
Men who would give me accurately to the unborn
As if I were something simple, like bread.
But Pete, with his headband stuffed with fishhooks,
His gift for rushing in where angels wouldn't,
Tom, for whom metaphor is anathema,
And James and John, who want the room at the top—
These numbskulls are my medium. I called them.

I am tattooing God on their makeshift lives.
My Keystone Cops of disciples, always
Running absurdly away, or lying ineptly,
Cutting off ears and falling into the water,
These Sancho Panzas must tread my Quixote life,
Dying ridiculous and undignified,
Flayed and stoned and crucified upside down.
They are the dear, the human, the dense, for whom
My message is. That might, had I not touched them,
Have died decent respectable upright deaths in bed.

Against Yeats

O dear wonderful humbug
spouting your ceremonies
of innocence, while you
imagined yourself a swan
all the genteel porn of
the classical painters
helping you to imagine
yourself with a great, big
bill beating above that girl.
Wondering if, *mastered* (revealing
pun) by your brute blood,
Leda contrived to put on
your knowledge, as she got
the sharp point of your power?
All power just is that
revealing indifference to
knowledge of those mastered.
Yet I take some delight in it all,
the great dictator telling
his secretary his nights
out he's a feathered glory,

as he slides the swan skin out
of his desk. I've heard with delight
several professors slide out
this poem as vision of history:
the father of the gods
engendering Troy and all that
by poetic justice of rape,
and the breeding ground of it all,
history lounging there vague
fingers pushing across
the page. You imagined
the swan a holy dove, a violent
annunciation, yet can't quite save
yourself from compromising analogy,
a Holy Ghost that looks like Papageno.
Inexpressible silliness, but you
expressed just that, the great
unpaid bill, history lately
falling about in laughter as
putting on swan-suit you
are caught with your trousers down.

Gay Clifford

NOTES & TOPICS

European Diary

Incident in Vitry

By François Bondy



doura. They had been living in a town not far from Paris, Vitry-sur-Seine in the Val-de-Marne department, since their *poste* in the neighbouring commune of St Maur had been medically condemned and was to be reconstructed.

The Mayor of Vitry, Paul Mercieca, happens to be a Communist, and the Mayor of St Maur, Jean-Louis Beaumont, turns out to be a friend of President Giscard; and this double piquancy no doubt gave a special sharpness to the nation-wide notoriety which both local politicians suddenly enjoyed.

Moving from St Maur to Vitry, the men from Mali—all workers who had left their families

Paris

THE HAPPENING took place shortly before Christmas, and it involved some 300 or so Mohammedan workers from Mali, all emigrants from the same village and similarly dressed in their traditional *boubou* and *gandoura*.

¹ As I write, a Paris correspondent reports:

"The French Communist party yesterday denied that M. Georges Marchais, its leader and presidential candidate, had warned Parisians of the danger that Asian immigration could turn parts of Paris into a 'Hong Kong on Seine.'

"However the sense of the Communist leader's warning, continuing an obvious attempt to win white votes in areas heavily inhabited by immigrants, appeared to be the same, if less colourfully expressed:

"The situation created by the Government and by M. Chirac, Mayor of Paris, in the Place d'Italie area where thousands of South East Asian refugees are now concentrated, leads me to emphasise that we Communists are opposed to the formation of ghettos of any kind with all the problems of cohabitation, schooling and social burdens which they create."

The area in question is thickly populated with Vietnamese, Cambodians, and Laotians who have fled from the Communist takeover in Indo-China.

(Daily Telegraph, 16 February)

behind in "French Africa"—found themselves new and not unattractive living quarters, with the help of subsidies which the French government gives to foreign "guest-labour." In a matter of days (I am sorry, but it was Christmas Eve) the Mayor made an official call in the company of Senators and other local dignitaries, members of his Party and of the CGT-trade unions, and also a squad of sturdy law-and-order specialists. The concierge was arrested and handcuffed, and the hundreds of keys in his possession confiscated; gas and electricity were cut off; the boilers were put out of action; some damage to doors and windows symbolically testified to the new status of a "homeless community." Mayor Mercieca simply informed the representative of the Mali workers: "Back to St Maur—there's nothing here for you! . . ."

The Malis wanted to stay where they were, and did, repairing as much as could be fixed and put into function again, and found themselves in the middle of yet another great French scandal. Against the "commando action" of the Communist Party the entire Left rallied to protest. But one began to wonder: the protest was mainly against the "methods" but hardly against the essence of the operation. The socialists of Vitry, for example, were full of indignation mixed with pertinent housing advice on the availability of quarters . . . in St Maur. Well, it finally came up to the level of Georges Marchais, general-secretary of the Communist Party of France, to whom the Imam of the Mosque in Paris had written to ask for the disavowal of his local Party enthusiast. But Marchais only had loyal solidarity with his Vitry comrade, and he reiterated his warning that the Party disapproved of the creation of "ghettos" of foreign workers in the Paris outskirts. This raised a few eyebrows, for when other labour and liberal groups had expressed concern about such concentrations they had been charged by none other than Marchais' CPF with the most evil "racism."¹

Why, in fact, was there a *Foyer* with hundreds of available beds in Vitry? The previous tenants were North Africans and Portuguese, and after a series of disagreeable protests over rent they had been forcibly removed by the CRS-Police, all on the ground that Mayor Mercieca needed the places for young French proletarians. In any case, the problems were becoming "difficult", especially in the local schools where there were "too many foreign pupils." (Nobody found the argument credible, since school-children were not involved here, only the billeting of male workers.)

The double-talk soon spread, as Communist-controlled communes elsewhere also raised the xenophobic hue and cry about "aliens" and "foreigners." A few intellectuals might have been outraged at this betrayal of the great enlightened traditions of Party and Revolution, but most political observers sensed the shrewd, perhaps even

cynical, stratagem to win new votes. In some of the suburban communities of Paris the total of foreign workers amounts to some 13-to-17%, and "Internationalism" is just not on. The local cry is: "Enough is enough!", and in such an atmosphere of resentment and hostility the French Communist Party can only gain, not lose, from its "racist" turn. In and around Paris live (mostly from Africa and Portugal) more than a third of all the *ouvriers immigrés* in France. The stormy argument turns on whether they are actually taking away jobs—in automobile factories, construction sites, road-building—from Frenchmen, who are after all citizens . . . and voters.

Someone has suggested a liberal way out, namely by giving the vote to those foreign workers who have established residence after a certain number of years. This may not solve the underlying social problem, but no one doubts that there might be a resurgence of enlightened internationalism in the ranks of comrades Marchais and Mercieca—for workers who are also voters (at least in Western Europe) they have a deep respect.

"Terza Pagina"



Milan

NO DOUBT ABOUT IT, journalism here has a special style and distinction, and no one, for example, can fail to be impressed by the major role of writers and poets in the columns of the Italian daily press. In France and Germany a few, Britain and the USA hardly any; but in Italy all the major literary voices have their platforms in the various newspapers of Rome, Milan, and Turin. On the one side, it could be that the *literati* and the intelligentsia here feel more strongly the crisis of values, of institutions and social behaviour, and have accordingly been driven to engagement and commitment. On the other hand, it could be that the politicians and statesmen of post-War Italy were so utterly incapable of clear and incisive expression that the Italian writers had to take over the function of civic communication. This is the

point that Italo Calvino makes in his recent book *Una pietra sopra* (Einaudi), thus explaining how he and all his colleagues came to be performing as a kind of billboard for the nation.

Then, too, there is the tradition in the Italian newspapers of the "Terza Pagina"; and once established as a feature the third page has to be filled with essays, fiction, poems, think-pieces which the reader has come to expect. The first two columns are the so-called *Elzeviro*, often a short story, and if you have ever wondered why so many Italian writers produce so many short stories, remember this special little marketable corner. I myself have just been catching up with some of these in Bompiani's new collection by Luigi Malerba, *Dopo il pescecane* (After the Shark).

They are keen to supply the demand, but this has its dangers as well as its advantages. The writers are free to say anything, and they go on saying, chatting, musing and surmising, no matter what. This was the embarrassing case after the murder by the terrorists of Aldo Moro. In the *Corriere della Sera* the late Pier Paolo Pasolini had his guaranteed place to write as he pleased, even when it pleased him to call summarily for a "People's Trial" against the Christian Democrats; for, after all, he was an accredited revolutionary, a recognised moralist, a licensed prophet. As such he smote friends and foes alike.

I HAVE OFTEN FOUND in other European capitals, not to mention New York City, a certain envy and admiration for the Italian connection between high-brow writers and daily journalism. Does Saul Bellow write for the *Washington Post*? Did T. S. Eliot offer his verse to *The Times*? Grass and Böll wouldn't be found in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. It could be that the post-War post-Fascist Italian press had a special need for prestige, for unlike in the rest of Europe the average citizen here reads less; fewer papers are sold; and journalism necessarily takes on an elitist character. Again, to give the other and shinier side of the coin, it might well be (as the writers themselves like to believe) that intellectuals sense more acutely the crisis of society and respond more urgently than the man-in-the-street to the call to duty and action. In any event, nowhere else that I know do the famous writers of a nation jump so rapidly into print whenever some public issue presents itself.

Calvino complains that the weekly and monthly magazines which once used to play an important role in helping to mould public opinion no longer do so. Still, for my own part, I feel a certain weariness as I receive yet another collection of ageing, yellowing clippings in the form of a new book of essays, editorials, comments, and general pronouncements. Alberto Moravia, until very recently, was unchallengeable as the fastest

editorial gun in the West. Alas, one recalls as the years go by so very few of his pieces. Leonard Sciascia is another whose *belles lettres* are more memorable than his newspaper columns. I feel no more cheered by the latest of the collections, a new book called *Un paese senza* (A country without), published by Garzanti for the 50-year-old Alberto Arbasino, who explains that it is “an adieu to the 1970s, a farewell to a little-loved decade. . . .”

A country without what? Arbasino writes: “A country without memory, with a loss of general knowledge, without an awareness of its own anthropology, a land of dreamers with no roots in reality, of day-trippers into the imaginary, a land that has turned its back on itself, a land of provincialism which ignores all opinions but its own, and is prepared to assert itself even while being unclear about all essentials and repressing even the smallest details. . . .” In this spirit Arbasino, in the great tradition of Italian critics and prophets, accuses, attacks, satirises, warns. The examples of Manzoni and Leopardi are detectable here, and indeed in the work of someone like Italo Calvino one senses that old Manzoni is being dragged into relevance. Arbasino, for all his thundering as a happy warrior, is still unhappy about the general literary situation: “Our Italian literature amounts to less, say, than the Austrian literature without German readers, or perhaps English literature without an American readership. . . .”

MY WORRY is not that the Italian journalist-critic doesn't know what he is talking about, but rather that he is so totally over-informed. He reads everybody's novels, the histories from everywhere, and is up-to-the-minute about trends, modes, styles, and fashions. The references in his writings are so many and wide, the suggestive asides so innumerable, that in the end we are quite convinced that if his native land is thoroughly, completely, and hopelessly provincial it is fortunate at least in having in him a seer with a world horizon. I am afraid that the knowing winks of a know-it-all are themselves the signs and symptoms of a provincial. His point of departure is always that anything of importance is inevitably happening somewhere else. In Paris, as in New York, one constantly encounters the certainty that what's important is taking place now among them, and anything else—that is, before they begin to pay attention to it—simply doesn't exist. Arbasino is characteristic of that spirit in Italian writing today which suspects that greatness of spirit is not among them, is actually elsewhere. The charm and the error consist, of course, in not knowing how “typically Italian” all that is.

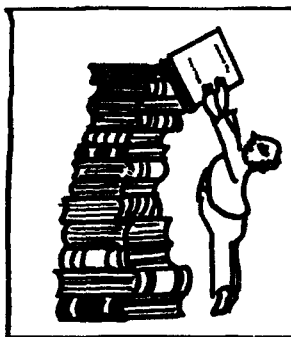
The note is registered in various scales by Luigi Malerba; and in one of his stories, “Mafofo”, his protagonist is so impressed by the power of the *onorata società* (as the Mafia likes to think of itself)

that he tries everywhere to “only connect”, going even as far as the top man in the Ministry of Culture, to try to make contact, to join, to belong at long last, and of course he gets nowhere fast.

If the highbrows are a shade too bitter, some of the middle-brows save the day with a decent, modest tone of irony. Mondadori has just published the last collection of newspaper pieces I will mention, Luca Goldoni's *Dipende* (It all depends. . . .). It is good to get a moralist sometimes who is less engaged and funnier than the all-too-earnest Moravias and Arbasinos. As Goldoni writes, “We are not a people of 57 million—but of 56 million, 999 thousand, 999, plus one. This one is every one of us—when he gets around to talking about all the others. . . .”

Exit This Way

Berlin



IF THERE IS one conspicuous example of efficiency in the East German set-up, it is the Exit Visa department. You don't even have to apply to get out. The latest “emigrants” are two more writers, and it is almost as if Lenin liked the Platonic

idea of banning men of art from the ideal republic. Frank-Wolf Mathies, aged 30, and the 29-year-old Lutz Rathenow have now joined a long line of East German writers in the West who never even asked to leave. Some, like Wolf Biermann, get the bitter-sweet news while doing their stint abroad; others are simply “transported.”

For young Germans, born and bred in the post-War East German Communist Republic, it is always a difficult fate to comprehend, this cruel expatriation from “the only thing we know”, the *DDR*. But in a society where everything is nationalised and is the property of the State, anybody can be expropriated and subject to export. The East German Minister of Culture once announced in Leipzig that “*Unsere Literatur gehört uns* (Our literature belongs to us!). . . .” What he meant was that it didn't belong to you, or to some “common national culture of two separate states” (which the *DDR*'s constitution still mentions), certainly not to the shared language or the outside world. In Germany the phrase for chattel slaves or indentured servants was *Leibeigenen*, for

the bodies belonged to their owners; now we have the new concept of *Geisteigene*, for minds and spirits are also part of the new social property-relations. When a bureaucracy considers itself to be the owner of literature, then it has the absolute personal right not only to cultivate its own garden but also to remove ruthlessly such weeds as it deems harmful.

In this light why treat young writing as a bloom of new flowers? Rowohlt in Hamburg was the Western publisher who brought out a collection of the stories of Frank-Wolf Mathies, and in one of the tales he writes of Elisabeth G.'s "panic every time she switched on to the television station of the land she lived in and felt herself paralysed by the voices and words addressed to her. . . ." As for the green automobile which she saw parked on the street opposite her house, inside were three men "who did nothing but sit inside, unmistakably self-confident, unmistakably bored. . . ." Weeds, nothing but poisonous weeds.

Ullstein (in West Berlin) is the publisher of Lutz Rathenow's work, and the one I have been reading is called *Mit dem Schlimmsten wurde schon gerechnet* (One has already reckoned with the worst). In it there is a "Protokoll" against two unfortunate characters, with an enormous dossier of testimony, legal petitions, evidence from workers' collectives, and what-not. The investigation has to do with the disappearance of a little piece of electrical

apparatus, actually a minor switch to install electric lighting in a factory toilet, in order to make the proletariat happier. It is all so humdrum and harmless, but the atmosphere conveyed is dark and uncanny. Not something we would want in our garden. . . . We don't need the spurious sensitivity which registers "a significant loss in the collective discipline", even if the reference is only to declining team-spirit during a Saturday afternoon football match.

LIKE SO MANY other talented older East German writers, they could only publish their new work in the West. But this fact alone—quite apart from whatever was written, or its explication by literary critics—is a culpable act nowadays because it has been legislated into illegality on the grounds of "foreign-currency impropriety." If only that were the sum total of the matter! Why, then, the confiscation of manuscripts and the inquisition of novelists and poets? Well, the Minister of Culture (who, of course, owns it all), says that writers who get published elsewhere should go elsewhere. Even then he is not altogether consistent, and leaves a dialectical exception for authors like Stefan Heym who still live in the East and go on publishing in the West . . . at the moment.

The problem of a split culture has been with the Germans now for decades, and a long time ago

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when Uwe Johnson chose to move his books and writing table from East to West across a still-open frontier he explained that he was merely transplanting himself from one currency area to another. He said nothing then of censorship or political pressures; but even the mere "financial" stratagem has taken on the character of a cultural crime. Try as they might, German writers are finding it well-nigh impossible to keep on improvising "bridges" across the two cultures. Günter Grass has spent years advocating an all-German Cultural Foundation which might support a bridge between the two Germanies, otherwise so hopelessly divided politically and economically. But the peremptory expulsion of the *literati*, young and old, indicates that the break is nowhere sharper than here. When they hear the word culture, they reach for your passport.

F.B.

London Commentary

On the Left of Centre

By Stephen Haseler



THIS YEAR will be a decisive time of transition for British party politics. We shall witness, perhaps hazily but more likely coherently, an attempt to reshape the contours of the traditional party system, the outlines of which have been unnatural and un-

representative for some years past. This necessary restructuring, or realignment, will not be the product of some fanciful design but rather the inevitable consequence of the fundamental change which has taken place within the Labour Party apparatus—a transformation which both separates Labour from large sections of its erstwhile constituency and, at the same time, poses a challenge to the whole political, economic and social system which has developed in Britain this century.

The fact of a systemic challenge by a major party cannot properly be detected at the level of debate about specific policy prescriptions. Unless specific policies are obviously outlandish and/or

revolutionary (such as withdrawal from NATO and other alliances; or, on the domestic front, proposals for abolishing the quinquennial act) a policy debate within a party can often obscure fundamental political change. Too many Social Democrats have been content to see the debate between Right and Left within the Labour Party—and to assess the state of the party—on this level. Consequently, the Labour right (as well as Liberals, Conservatives, and media commentators) have tended to get embroiled in specific arguments about the precise size of the public sector, the exact role of governmental boards like the NEB, the proper amount of import controls, the right kind of defence strategy, and so on—and all this to the detriment of the necessary detachment needed to analyse and detect the incipient totalitarian threat which the Labour Left now poses to democratic arrangements as a whole.

MUCH MORE ILLUMINATING are the intellectual trends and political events (and they are often difficult to disentangle) which take place within the Party itself. First, there has been the growth of crypto-Marxist ideas, analysis and rhetoric within the counsels of Labour. This development has been the subject of numerous books and articles and

Jenkins' Return

London

THE RETURN OF Mr Roy Jenkins from Brussels is an event of importance for British politics. Even if it can by no means be taken for granted that if Mrs Shirley Williams, Dr David Owen and/or Mr William Rodgers break away from Labour they will then look to Mr Jenkins as their leader.

Even if he does not lead a new party, whether of social democrats or of the centre, Mr Jenkins still has much to contribute to any party or group of which he is a member. There is a tendency in much political comment to assume that it is only party leaders who really matter. This is a facile confusion of prominence with influence—a mistake that may be expected in the television age, but a mistake nonetheless. Mr Jenkins is a politician of experience, intellect and accomplishment in foreign affairs, in economics—he was the best Chancellor of the past twenty-five years—and in those broad areas of social policy where he has for long been a notable exponent of liberal principles.

In all three areas—but especially in economics, where otherwise a weakness is all too evident—Mr Jenkins would bring weight to any political party between the Conservatives and Labour. That applies with equal force whether one is thinking of the Liberals, of Social Democrats, or even of some new comprehensive Centre party. Mr Jenkins is not the ideal leader of a party in this middle ground, but a party is more likely to flourish there if he is playing a leading part in it.

THE TIMES

need not be repeated at length here.¹ Suffice it to suggest that there have been specific political events (for instance, the abolition of the "Proscribed List" of Communist Front organisations in 1974 and the appointment of an avowed Leninist as Labour's National Youth Officer in 1976) which have highlighted this underlying trend, and against which Social Democrats should have reacted strongly and decisively at the time. Some of us did so; but there were not nearly enough, and many backed off—fearful of being branded by the Left with the absurd label of "McCarthyism."

Secondly, and even more crucially, the Left have attempted (successfully) during the decade of the 1970s to enact a series of organisational changes aimed at securing Party control over the legislature, the first phase of which is to establish Party control

over the Parliamentary Labour Party and through it over a future Labour government. The "leading role of the Party" over the Parliamentary Labour group of MPs is now virtually complete. Mandatory re-selection of MPs—a stratagem for ideological purges—will go ahead this year, and no matter the numbers ousted in this process it will secure compliance by the PLP to the Party apparatus. The election of the Leader of the Party will pass from MPs to an "electoral college" which will be utterly unrepresentative of Labour voters and supporters. Essentially, in rejecting both local primaries and the "one man, one vote" formulae put forward by Dr David Owen, the Party apparatus has excluded the wider Labour constituency from any participation at all in determining future directions. It is only consistent that the controlling forces on Labour's National Executive should now be discussing the idea (to emerge later this year) of giving "the Movement" a say not only

¹ See David Marquand's influential "Inquest on a Movement", in *ENCOUNTER*, July 1979.

The Prospects of the "Liberal-Left"



B RITAIN'S proposed new centre party has already won massive support from voters, a special *Sun* poll has revealed. And it would have an amazing runaway victory if it fought an election now, the survey shows. Breakaway Labour moderates are expected to form a new party in alliance with the Liberals.

The *Sun* poll reveals that 43% of the voters would back a combined Liberal-Social Democratic Party—with the Tories trailing second and Labour a poor third.

But former Labour deputy leader Roy Jenkins or ex-Education Secretary Shirley Williams—two of the "Gang of Four" planning the party—are not the voters' top choice to head it. They prefer Liberal leader David Steel, who is waiting in the wings. Shirley Williams comes second in popularity, followed by Mr Jenkins. Then come former Foreign Secretary Dr David Owen and ex-Minister William Rodgers.

THE SURVEY, conducted by Audience Selection in January, is the first big test of opinion since Labour's disastrous conference at Wembley, and the subsequent announcement that fed-up moderates are moving to create a new party.

THERE IS bad news for Labour leader Michael Foot—40% of the backing for the new party comes from Labour voters. But the Tories are in trouble too, with 29% of their supporters ready to defect.

QUESTION: If there were a General Election tomorrow, how would you vote?

ANSWER:

Labour 38%; Conservative 36%; Liberal 15%; Others 3%; Don't know 8%.

QUESTION: If you could vote for a combined Liberal and Social Democratic Party—that is a coalition party led by people like David Steel, Roy Jenkins and Shirley Williams—how would you vote?

ANSWER:

Liberal-Social Democratic 43%; Conservative 22%; Labour 19%; Others 1%; Don't know 15%.

QUESTION: Which of these reasons best explains why you would vote for the Liberal-Social Democratic coalition?

ANSWER:

To get a moderate, middle-of-the-road government 30%; It's good to give a new party a chance 17%; It's led by intelligent and reasonable people 15%; It has good policies for Britain 15%; To get rid of Mrs Thatcher 12%; The increased extremism of the Labour Party 11%.

QUESTION: Last Saturday a Labour Party conference changed the way of electing the Labour Party leader.

Instead of being elected just by Labour MPs, he will now be elected by the trade unions with 40 per cent of the votes, by Labour constituency parties with 30 per cent, and by Labour MPs with 30 per cent. What do you think of this decision?

ANSWER:

A very bad decision 58%; A rather bad decision 18%; A rather good decision 15%; A very good decision 9%.

Among Labour supporters questioned, 57 per cent rated the leadership decision badly.

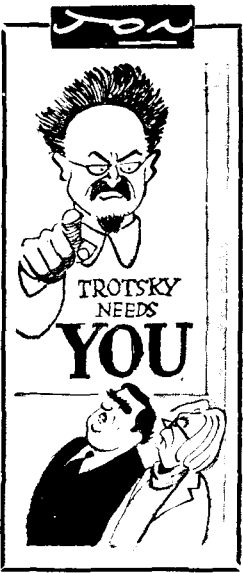
Walter Terry
in *THE SUN* (London)

in the election of Leader but also in the election of the shadow cabinet. Who says *A*, must say *B*.

AN INTRIGUING EVENT occurred during the last Annual Conference of the Party in Blackpool which offers a further glimpse into the future strategy of the controlling forces on the NEC. An executive recommendation was placed before conference that in the event of a Labour Prime Minister dying in office the "NEC should take whatever steps are necessary" to fill the post. This ominous suggestion was voted down; partly because it was cobbled together at the last moment, partly because the centre still had enough votes to stop it. However, these kind of proposals have a habit of capturing greater support every year; and there cannot now be long delay before the Labour Party is committed to, though not overtly articulating, a novel constitutional device: "The Queen and NEC in Parliament. . ."

This kind of challenge, clearly posed by the Labour Party apparatus to the whole liberal-democratic system, is now (at long last) widely accepted. There can no longer be any sensible excuse for "Labourists", "social democrats", "moderates" (however one wishes to depict the non-Marxist wing of the Labour Party) to carry on

within the Party unless it is simply for career purposes. Those "moderates" within the PLP who will follow what we might call "the Hattersley route" will be deluding themselves if they think that they will be allowed the power or position to mitigate the kind of society which the next Labour government, should there be one, would set out to construct. The notion of a "Block of 60" (or "40" or "20") moderate Labour MPs is superficially attractive; and although this strategy is now actively being canvassed it does not remain a viable option. It does not work because the mechanisms of Party control over the legislature which are now being implemented will preclude it. "Mandatory re-selection" is the key here. A number of Social Democrats have already been purged. Any Labour MP who seeks to thwart extreme socialist legislation in the next Parliament will simply, in similar fashion, be threatened with de-selection (and in circumstances in which many more constituency Labour parties will have been infiltrated and controlled by Trotskyites and their allies). Even by the time of the next election, most moderate Labour MPs either will have been dropped or, under the pressure of events, will have made their personal decisions to stay with Labour no matter what its evolving political complexion.²



AT yesterday's meeting of the National Executive of the Labour Party, Labour moderate John Golding moved a resolution which would have blocked the acceptance of Trotskyite Mr Terry Harrison. But although Mr Michael Foot and Mr Denis Healey were both present at the meeting, Mr Golding found no second for his motion.

THE Trotskyite Mr Rod Fitch, 33, bricklayer, was chosen by Brighton (Kemptown) constituency party as its parliamentary candidate after a stormy meeting at which moderates tried to stop his nomination.

It was a remarkable coup for the pro-Benn "Militants", who now already have two men in the field at a time when fewer than a dozen Labour constituency parties have chosen candidates for the next election.

DAILY MAIL

CONSIDER THE CASE OF Giles Radice, the moderate Labour MP for Chester-le-Street and present chairman of the "Manifesto Group" of Labour MPs. He very recently argued (*The Guardian*, 12 January) in an article entitled "Why the Labour Party Must Not Split" that:

"It is quite possible for the Labour Party to unite on defence. We can all agree that Trident is too expensive, that NATO should negotiate with the Russians to ensure that cruise missiles need never be installed, and that we should give disarmament a greater priority. . ."

The various factions may be able to agree on these carefully constructed phrases, but does this mean very much? Labour's NEC, the Annual Conference, and the Leader all favour "unilateral nuclear disarmament." Giles Radice does not. It does not augur well for the "blocking 60" thesis

² According to a report in *The Times* (London):

"It was absurd that Labour should allow the extreme left-wing 'Militant Tendency' to organize as a party within a party, Mr Roy Hattersley, MP, told a meeting organized by the Fabian Society.

Militant's influence was growing. Whereas the Labour Party was in serious financial trouble, with a £500,000 deficit, the Militant organization had a surplus of £250,000 and had almost as many 'agents' in the constituencies as the party itself."

that even at this stage, in this Parliament, such impossible circles are still trying to be squared.

WHAT THEN, is to be done to save Britain from a militant left lurch, which is to say from an incoming NEC-Labour government? The stakes here are very high indeed; at risk, in my view, is the entire liberal democratic system as we have known it in Britain. How exactly to secure the system will remain a source of keen debate carried through in the context of economic policy, but unless party politicians can get our party alignments and political formations into proper shape by the time of the next election NEC-Labour could win that election outright, and in this event the re-invigoration of liberal-democratic society will be next to impossible.

The fundamental problem with present party alignments is that should the Conservatives remain the only real alternative to NEC-Labour at the next election then Labour appears almost certainly able to win an overall majority. Boundary redistribution, now proceeding, will help the Conservatives

(an educated guess gives the Conservatives an "extra" 20 seats). Even so there are powerful factors working in the other direction. First, there is the normal swing against the sitting government, no matter its political complexion. No British government that has run a term longer than 18 months (and this present government is already nearly two years old) has been re-elected since 1959. Accumulated resentments are now so great against any sitting government that the odds must be on the major alternative party (now running 10% or so ahead in the opinion polls). With Unemployment unlikely to have been reduced below 2½ million (it will probably be higher) and with Inflation probably still in double figures, the election of 1983 or 1984 is hardly likely to break the now firmly established precedent.

SO REALIGNMENT is fundamental. There are two forms that such a realignment can take. By far the worst is a reconstruction of the whole party system on the lines of "another 1931." Interestingly enough Anthony Wedgwood Benn is reported (*The Observer*, 21 December) as predicting such an out-

On "Totalitarian Democracy"

LABOUR'S disastrous Wembley conference will serve a purpose if it opens the eyes of the British public. "This is a deeply corrupt assembly", said the delegate from Abingdon, to howls of rage from the overwhelmingly Left Wing gathering. "This is the final remaining rotten borough."

At the heart of the corruption lies the gangrenous system which allows union bosses, literally, to buy as many votes as they please. "The union block vote", said John Morris, MP, "depends on how much money you can put on the table." That was why, he said, the electoral college system was essentially "fraudulent."

WE WERE TOLD how NUPE, to increase its constitutional muscle, simply plonked down the cash and added 100,000 Labour Party votes to its tally. The Transport Workers bought an extra quarter of a million votes. These two unions, thus reinforced, played decisive roles in the decision taken.

Hence the overwhelming majority of the so-called 5,452,000 votes which gave the Left its victory are not real people at all—they are simply figures in a cash register.

As Frank Chapple told the conference—to jeers and shouts of abuse—the total of votes bought by some unions is greater than their actual membership.

EVEN SOME of the Union leaders are ashamed of the block vote system. "It's true the block vote is sinister", said Sid Weighell of the Railwaymen, "I know because I've got one in my hand." Pleading for the simple democracy of one-man-one-vote, Terry Duffy of the Engineers begged the conference to trust "the ordinary lads and lasses."

Nothing doing! The fascist Left militants who have now got the upper hand do not like ordinary voters who prefer to live normal lives and are interested in other things beside politics. "I don't want passive democracy", snarled one constituency fanatic, "I want active, involved democracy."

This remark got the biggest cheer of the whole conference—a cheer for what the militants call "the democracy of the committed", also known in the One-Party states of Africa and Asia as "guided democracy", and behind the Iron Curtain as "democratic centralism."

In this extremist madhouse, the new leader Michael Foot looked like a lost soul. He is too old, too outmoded, too feeble and irresolute, mouthing well-meaning platitudes and uplift, like Ramsay MacDonald in his pathetic last phase.

AT WEMBLEY the new Marxist-Labour Party was born—and that is what in future we should call it. I do not think it will prosper. It is based, as the slogans and jeers of Wembley made clear, on the rejection of universal suffrage, hatred of the secret ballot and contempt for the parliamentary system.

These are institutions to which the overwhelming majority of the British people are deeply, if usually silently, attached—as demagogues like Oswald Mosley discovered to their cost.

Labour at Wembley, it seemed to me, laid down the strategy for the greatest electoral defeat in its history.

Paul Johnson
in the DAILY MAIL

come. He sees as a possibility the formation, during an acute economic crisis, of a Centre-Right national coalition involving the Conservatives (after they have both formally and rhetorically changed economic course), the Liberals, and some social democrats. This would leave NEC-Labour as the only alternative (an outcome much to the liking of Wedgwood Benn). If such a "National Government" should fail, and this naturally cannot be ruled out, then the "socialist alternative" would be unstoppable.

A much more sensible form of realignment involves the creation of a new Left-of-centre political party. This, promisingly, now seems the course upon which British politics is set; and although many details are yet to be decided—organisational questions, the leadership, relations between Social Democrats and Liberals—the sheer dynamics of the political situation will, in my view, call such a party forth.

There are two great advantages for Britain in such a new political development. First, it will give our liberal-democratic system the time which it desperately needs to reform itself. A new Left-of-centre party will cut deep into Labour's traditional vote as well as capturing votes from other parties and from the disaffected. It is the surest guarantor of denying the next election victory to NEC-Labour.

But as well as buying time for the social system as a whole a Left-of-centre party is uniquely placed to begin the massive radical reforms which are needed in Britain. It may be very late in the day but there is no alternative but to begin work now on a programme of reforms, changes and ameliorations without which no sensible economic policy can possibly work; and these reforms cannot, I believe, be pursued by the Conservative Party as it is presently constituted.

These reforms are non-economic. They all will contribute to securing a society which is mobile and open—"modern", if one will—and increasingly "classless." Political reform should be geared to democratising Britain. Above all, votes should count; and proportional representation, primaries, and the judicious use of referenda can begin to break the stranglehold of the old two-party system which traps and ossifies so much of the political talent of the country. Social reforms are also essential, particularly in public housing and state education. One can hardly begin to weaken the class system in Britain while large numbers of our people are trapped in their localities (often in areas with large pools of unemployment) by a Council-Housing serfdom which severely restricts mobility; nor can we begin to attack class while we encourage a two-sided and mutually antagonistic educational system at secondary level. Nor is it possible to weaken the restrictive practices of

labour without a similar incursion into those of the professions.

THESE KINDS OF REFORM will be what a Left-of-centre political party should be all about. They go to the very heart of "the British disease" (so incisively diagnosed by David Marquand in *ENCOUNTER*'s December 1980 issue). The fact that successive post-War governments—including the Attlee administration—failed in varying degrees to modernise and democratise our society does not mean that we do not have one last chance. We probably are witnessing a lucky conjunction of developments—an unpopular Conservative administration, a decline in respect and support for both major parties, an electorate (including large numbers of working people) still highly suspicious of extreme socialism and the Labour Party's Left militants who have pushed their luck too far and too fast. Circumstances at present allow a new Left-of-centre party to get off the ground more quickly than might otherwise be the case. As long as the opening presented by this "window of opportunity" is used properly then not only can we save Britain from its impending defection from the Western family of nations but we can begin the long-term reconstruction necessary to keep it there.

S.H.

An Americanist in Paris

By Jean-François Revel

Paris



IT IS FASHIONABLE to see America as in "decline", to diagnose an "American disease." A crisis of political will; economic decadence; antiquated industries; slackening productivity; a dearth of innovation and research; falling military strength and a loss

of world-political pre-eminence—these themes have become journalistic commonplaces in the last few years, and not least in the American press. We Europeans often raise these issues ourselves, and, at our best, attempt to distinguish truth from sloganeering licence and exaggeration: because the effect of darkening the transatlantic picture has been to make some commentators switch all the

way from an image of the Americans as universal pioneers of the modern world to one of such decrepitude that they've been practically relegated to the level of Albania in the 1920s.

An intellectual fashion is always interesting because it constitutes an enlarged caricature of reality; and seen that way it could be instructive. Taken literally, it becomes pernicious; especially when, endorsed by mindless repetition and perpetuated by sheer ignorance, it works to obscure the facts. In the matter of the so-called American "decline", this second stage will soon have been reached.

SO MICHEL CROZIER'S BOOK¹ appears in France at that happy moment when a subject is ripe but not yet rotten. And I doubt if Crozier the sociologist has ever been so sensitised to his subject by Crozier the man, or expressed himself with so much verve and clarity. The author of *Le Mal américain* is not only one of those Frenchmen who really knows the United States, but, rarer still, he has a deep intuitive grasp of American society (except perhaps for the media). Despite a few minor inexactitudes which would be unforgivable in a journalist but are venial in an academic, *Le Mal américain* also possesses one of the distinctive qualities of good writing, namely that the reader picks up a lot of things which have nothing to do with the author's particular arguments.

Having first set foot in the United States in the late 1940s as a bright young Frenchman (working on a thesis on trade unionism), Michel Crozier discovered, and kept rediscovering in the course of the next decade, what he calls *l'Amérique heureuse*, "the happy America." The social idealism of the labour movements, the ideal of truth in the universities, and the dream of rationality in the business schools, all these "*rêves*" then seemed so little removed from reality! And these achievements were reinforced by confidence in the effectiveness of the system of government and trust in the morality of the nation's leaders. Whereas, writing in 1980, Michel Crozier now discovers a trade-union movement factionally split into vested interests, some chauvinist, others conservative; disenchanted students who no longer believe in the republic of the mind; ossified business-managements grown short-sighted through constant focus on the "short term"; citizens who have lost faith in government and almost in democratic institutions too.

It is an indictment that contains an element of truth. It happens to be a fact that American business no longer has a monopoly of resourceful, ingenious management, the kind that goes hand in

hand with dynamic progress. One of Crozier's most incisive passages deals with this question:

"The application of computer technology to management makes data on the outcome of given actions much more immediately available; and, above all, it accelerates their transmission to the decision-makers. This improved access was originally supposed to have the effect of facilitating competition, and thus bringing it closer to the optimum. It is now clear that it has often become an inhibiting factor. When the overall figures for businesses reach the financial analysts punctually every quarter, they are forced to keep a closer and closer eye on the day-to-day details of management, for fear of losing their reputation on the financial market—the hanging judge of the profession. This fear magnifies the relative influence of short-term, quantitative management, as against the necessarily qualitative considerations of the long term.

"More generally speaking, the closer the state of the game among competitors, the less will they take the risk of making uncertain innovations. Nobody wants to chance his luck. Many management experts are beginning to be disturbed by this phenomenon, and to wonder whether the rationalisation of management (to which they themselves have made a powerful contribution) is not finally producing a suffocating effect."

It is also a fact that a critique of "productivism" and "economism" developed in the United States in the 1960s, and then became prevalent in Europe. The concept of "quality of life" (as distinct from, and preferred to, "quantity of goods") grew up in the United States before emigrating to Europe, and to France where it even gave rise to a whole governmental ministry (a charming one). In sheer economic performance, present-day productivity-minded Japan is the true heir of the United States in the 1950s. But we must also note that the United States still occupies first place in many sectors of research and production, both in agriculture (too easily overlooked) and in leading industries.

I recently read a report from California on "Silicon Valley", showing the extent of the American lead in miniaturised computer technology (the famous "silicon chip" microprocessors) which some observers mistakenly think of as a Japanese preserve; and quite apart from Silicon Valley, Texas Instruments is the world leader in integrated circuits. Even so, the fact still remains that America's economic power and standard of living compared with Western Europe's and Japan's are no longer crushingly superior as they were some 30 years ago. But is it helpful to take as points of reference the "years zero" when Europe and Japan were emerging ruined and

¹ *Le Mal américain*. By MICHEL CROZIER. Fayard, 56 Fr.

exhausted from World War II? Should it really be seen as an American “setback” to have rescued these areas from economic ruin, restored the balance between them and the USA, and at the same time to have made prodigious strides on their own account? That American industry is showing signs of wear-and-tear is undeniable, even though it is not so marked as in the military field (which Crozier, oddly, does not mention). Yet this economic strain is easily made to appear all the greater because we Europeans have grown richer in the meantime.

IN ANY CASE, WHAT IS interesting about *Le Mal américain* is that it reflects “*le bien européen*” at least as much as the infirmities of the United States—in other words the improvement in the situation of the European observer in relation to the transatlantic reality observed. In his political diagnosis, despite a host of clear and far-sighted observations, Crozier succumbs to the typically European tendency which makes us project our own sins on to the United States. When he occasionally depicts the US as a dismal blend of British incompetence and Italian anarchy, he almost makes us overlook that Great Britain and Italy are, after all, in Europe. I have no quarrel with seeing moonlighting as a serious problem for the US. But what about France? Similarly, Crozier talks about “the end of consensus” and “internecine warfare” across the Atlantic. But if there is one key symptom of civil strife in a society it is terrorism. And where do we find terrorism now and for some years past, not as occasional sensation but entrenched and daily murderous? Here or over there? In a week of Red Brigades, of Basque and Irish terror, bombs in Munich and in Bologna, there are more dead bodies than in twenty years of violent American racism.

WITHOUT UNDERESTIMATING America’s political, social and economic advances in the 1960s, not to mention the gains won by

feminism, Blacks, popular education, and fine-spirited ecology, and without ignoring the debit side either, Michel Crozier judiciously analyses the crisis in American decision-making. But here too, is it the whole system (which has frequently displayed its liability to seize up) which is played out, or is it a particular political programme? The crisis of the 1930s was to lead to the managed economy; that of the 1970s has produced the opposite. Government bureaucracy and welfarism, with no corresponding advances in productivity, is under fire everywhere—from Sweden to Italy. After all, *Time* magazine recently (1 December 1980) devoted its cover-story to the Crisis of the Welfare State—in Europe. . . .

BEFORE LABELLING Reagan a “reactionary”, I would think it necessary to ask what he is “reacting” against, and what steps “backwards” are really being made. Are we really dealing here with an attachment to the past, an inability to correct mistakes, and a powerlessness in the face of contemporary realities? The collapse which Michel Crozier observes in the American paternalist state is related deep down to what the Left-sociologist Alain Touraine describes in Europe in his book on “the post-socialist age” (*L’Après-socialisme*, published by Grasset). Let’s face it: for some years now, the neo-liberals—in the European sense of the word—have been closer to reality than *les dirigistes*, the planners. Fifty years ago it was quite the other way round. That is why fifty years ago Franklin Roosevelt crushed Herbert Hoover; and today the Republicans have crushed the Democrats. Thus, despite its many imperfections, “the System” is actually working, in the sense that it has democratically and peacefully brought to power those leaders who are carried by great changes in the tide of public opinion.

Crozier’s *Le Mal américain* is just as instructive for the reservations it elicits as for the agreements it compels. That is what good books are meant to do, especially when an author has had the courage to take on a major theme.

J.-F.R.

Art & Architecture

The Coarse Net & the Fine

Theories of Art—By PHILIP RAWSON

THIS IS NOT the occasion to analyse the historical and historicist theories that are invoked to justify varying sociological theses about art. To generalise, one can say that each tends to latch on to a particular aspect of selected works of art; and this aspect can then be taken as a definition not only of the whole work but of “art” at the time. The author is able thus to continue to weave his argument, fully persuaded that he “is dealing with” works whose essence he has totally defined.

This is something that would never have been done by arguably the greatest 19th-century comprehensive historian to take art seriously, Wilhelm Dilthey. His ideas were based on the assumption that the firmest historical evidence (there were other categories) was autobiography; though, of course, each case was subject to careful assessment. He held that works of art were among the most powerful evidence as to the true state-of-affairs at any given time, and the historian’s task was to start with reading the work’s meaning for its own time. He recognised *Weltgeschichte* as *Geistesgeschichte*, “World-history” as “history of the human spirit.”

Something comparable was in the mind of Henry Adams when he said, writing of Giambattista Vico, “True history is the history of the contents of men’s minds.” These cannot be read “with prejudice.” The simple fact, of course, is that even one’s best friends never know enough to write anything one would accept as a true history of one’s life. Biographers need to be creative artists, and art is not, in fact, identical with autobiography; though this may imply defects of truth and depth in what usually passes as autobiography. Every historian knows he must not only resist the temptation to interpret his evidence in the light of his own prejudices and prepossessions, and avoid interpreting one kind of evidence in terms of another, but also beware of the very language he uses to describe his evidence. Janet Wolff’s *Hermeneutic Philosophy and the Sociology of Art*¹ is an excellent study of the way

art critics who are not historians (including John Berger) fall into these traps.

How, then, are we, as artists, to take books on art with a sociological-historical, maybe Marxist, bent? One thing that does appear is that they tend to lose sight of their ultimate responsibility towards the totality of what they are reading as “the contents of men’s minds.” Instead—and this is crucial—they believe they are able to define what the artists they discuss were *actually* dealing with (if only they had known it), in quite alien concepts, but the evidence for their reading lacks the necessary depth. Such writers also assume that the historical reason for a work’s existence is identical with the content of the work. This has become an extraordinarily widespread fallacy—but fallacy it is. A corollary is that these authors use languages whose conceptual schemes are shaped by words to the framing of which the referential content of past works of art has made no contribution.

IT IS A NOTORIOUS SOURCE of academic conflict how silly parts of what even the most intelligent philosophers have to say can sound to an artist, when they discuss works of visual art. For example, despite his great interest in art, Heidegger on van Gogh’s boots (*not* peasant work boots as he believes), Merleau-Ponty on Cézanne, and Wittgenstein sound as if they come from another world. They seem to start from premises irrelevant to art, and the language they use does not refer to the referents of the art. Robert Harbison, who considers in *Deliberate Regression*² the progress of Romantic individualism, seems to try to get round this problem by turning the language he uses into florid rodomontade. It undeniably contains some interesting insights. But the text becomes almost impossible to read continuously, mostly because it seems to float so far above any factual reference. If one plays the old debunking semantic game of “find the referent” with a lot of his abstract nouns, their meaning all too often evaporates. To avoid using a precise language is not the answer to the problem. There are facts of art, artistic facts in their own terms, to which our wonderfully flexible English

¹ *Hermeneutic Philosophy and the Sociology of Art*. By JANET WOLFF. Routledge, £4.95.

² *Deliberate Regression*. By ROBERT HARBISON. André Deutsch, £8.95.

language can be made to refer back as a basis for any reading of art, once those facts are properly identified.

Another fashionable option is the sociological-historicist. The earliest work of this kind published in Britain was probably Arnold Hauser's *Social History of Art* (1951), still on reading lists. At the time it came out, when art publication was less hectically developed, it was possible to identify the single source-books out of which it was written. And if one checked (always interesting) the index entries for artists one knew really well, one could be led to doubt the basis of the speculation. For it seemed not to be written at all from the realities of art, or even those of society—which also then were not so well known. Genuine history demands a continual feedback adjustment between ideas and the actual perception and identification of facts. The nearest reference books will not do. (Rembrandt always makes a good case; especially as recent research suggests that all earlier historians have so far been deluded about his social and religious affiliations.)

Of course, any analytical approach to any subject is bound to be partial and schematic. As Ortega y Gasset wrote, to create a concept is to leave reality behind. But some social-historical writing seems to prefer to forget this caveat. The reality of a work of art as presence is always vastly more than its identity as concept when reduced to the notation prescribed in some non-artist's schema—e.g. a Marxist historian's.

More important still, its identity as a member of one class in one categorical set does not limit its identity as a member of a class in another categorical set based on other class differentiae. It is true to say, for example, that human hair is "external protein." In relation to the individual and society it can also, obviously, have many other meanings as a thing within different frames of reference, without ceasing to be protein. The biochemical is a good, strong, general category; but it does not totally encapsulate human hair as seen and understood within human contexts. Just so a certain act or work of art may be "political" in this or that sense; but that does not invalidate the possibility of its being "technical" in another sense, "personally expressive" in another. All these definitions may be true; none identifies it absolutely, nor do all of them added together. For any reality always extends beyond the limits of the human nets of concept in which we may seek to entrap it. And no verbal categories of the above kind can be any-

thing like absolute. The will to claim history as hard science is no substitute for fact.

IT IS TO CLEMENT GREENBERG's lasting credit that he attempted continually to resist pre-categorisation of art by people with theoretical axes to grind. Where it is clear from Donald Kuspit's book³ that Greenberg has failed is in not facing up to the need for defining his own terms at least provisionally. If he had done, it seems he might have felt trapped by them and would have lost the ability to upstage criticism by shifting his ground constantly like a guerrilla.

For exactly this reason, Greenberg has never been able to explain that which he positively looks for in art and by which he judges it. It does appear that, in practice, he favours disinterested, abstract, "pure" art, an art with nothing about it of the "charm" of description. (In this he seems to have inherited Kant's notion of classic art, without Kant's philosophical underpinning.) However, the distinction he seems to draw in his own mind between descriptive art (which he rejects) and his own favourite kind of disinterested abstraction now seems superficial.

For one thing, those categories do not any longer seem to fit the artists he championed and tried to influence. He reasons intensively about "arbitrariness", "the accidental" and "the achieved", so as to account for his own favouring of the American Abstract-Expressionists against the succeeding wave of Minimalists. But his terms remain those of taste, of "art for art's sake." So he is not exactly vulnerable to sociological arguments about art. He can merely be passed over as irrelevant; and he is. He has never been equipped philosophically to cope with *that* kind of dismissal. Although he is, and has been, talking about genuine characteristics of art as language, his taste led him (for historical reasons?) simply to dismiss the "descriptive" from consideration as a category of art; so he was never driven to define the intimate relationship between overt subject-matter and the visual language in which it is given form. Nor did he accept the implications of the idea that the abstract art he did admire had an obvious content both of image and of feeling. The sociological-historicist critics, of whom John Berger is a leading example, also fail totally in this respect; but from the opposite point of view. The two sides have no common ground upon which to meet.

³ *Clement Greenberg*. By DONALD B. KUSPIT. University of Wisconsin Press, £9.00, \$15.00.

⁴ *Beyond the Crisis in Art*. By PETER FULLER. Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative, £6.95, paper £3.95. *Seeing Berger: A Re-evaluation*. By PETER FULLER. Writers and Readers, £1.00.

PETER FULLER, in his often excellent writing, claims Berger as his early guru. He now states his dissatisfaction with Berger's terms of reference, and with where his guru has ended up.⁴ But his

attempts to define what it is he finds defective in Berger, and what it is he himself is looking for in art, also lack an adequate conceptual base.

Fuller shows himself a good, willing, very well-read historicist, prepared to take a stand against the prating nonsense that often passes for art-criticism, and against the silly art that such criticism generates from itself without any reference to a public; but he is uneasy about the language and concepts he finds himself forced to use in dealing with art. He sees the weaknesses of Greenberg's position despite his "good eye" and "clear pen." Because Greenberg holds that a good painting "cannot be about anything", he rejected in Pollock, for example, whom he admires, qualities of "gothicness", "stridency" and "paranoia." Fuller rightly criticises this anomaly in Greenberg's thought, pointing out that he and his followers failed entirely to recognise meaning in Jackson Pollock's painting, especially its relation to his personal anguish and his historic despair. Fuller makes valid points about the political use to which the American Establishment put art of the Abstract Expressionist epoch as cultural propaganda, but he, like Greenberg, simply fails to consider at all *why* and *how* "gothicness", "paranoia", "personal anguish" and "historic despair"—not to mention many other interesting emotions and thoughts—actually came across from such an artist to the spectator, *via* the

physical presence of the work of art.

What are the terms that convey these feelings? And what is their root in fact? If one thinks of the grand and tragic work of an artist like Mark Rothko, whose personal life is recorded as a shambles and whose physique was a ruin, one must go even further and reject any simple journalistic explanation of art as a direct reflection of the events of public and personal history. Such art, like all good art, has a content which is read from its forms, both actual and implied; but that is *not* the same as a formalist content. Good art is rarely about its own methods and concepts—though it has become a tired art-school cliché that "painting is about painting." It is true that a certain class of painters may consider in paint their own pictorial language, just as a certain class of writers may discuss the nature of *their* own language. But that in itself does not make good artists or writers; rather the opposite.

JOHN BERGER, on the other hand, went overboard for subject-matter. In doing this he, too, missed the true content of the art he deals with; though he made many interesting points and picked up fascinating side-issues. . . . *Ways of Seeing* has become an art teacher's classic. But the reissued

Picasso

"Why do you think I date everything I do?" Picasso once asked. "Because it's not sufficient to know an artist's works—it is necessary to know when he did them, why, how, under what circumstances . . . Someday there will undoubtedly be a science—it may be called the science of man—which will seek to learn about men in general through the study of creative man . . . That's why I put a date on everything I do."

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collection of essays called *About Looking*⁵ seems actually to be about anything and everything but looking at art. One thing it does not ever do is read thoroughly works of art in their own terms. One would have thought that was the prime necessity for discussing them, just as one would expect a literary critic to have read in its own language poetry he was going to discuss. Berger raises many interesting peripheral minutiae, but his writing skates away from reading the art-work into offering arbitrary projections—or even casual fantasies—as if they were deep personal insights.

In his essay on Rouault, for example, he interprets “the black outlines, the slash between the breasts, the burnt holes of the eyes” as an active “degrading” by the artist of some actual woman who must, he believes, have sat as model for the picture. This notion is permeated by omission and mistake. First, as a pupil of Moreau, and on the evidence of the picture, it is probable that Rouault, at that time, painted from his imagination. Second, the implied attitude is questionable, if not wrong. For Berger omits any mention whatever of Rouault’s deeply-felt Catholicism—a special brand of which inspired him throughout his life; through it all his experience was filtered. This put Rouault on the side of society’s miserable victims, and would never have allowed him to “degrade” them, on the side of their oppressors. But, as a brand of Marxist, Berger might find such positive aspects of Catholicism embarrassing.

Berger rarely reads the characteristics of art language even in the manner of that reading of Rouault’s style. Instead he seems to see art as a kind of emotionally coloured reportage about objects and events. The only level of experience he “matches” with an artistic image is what he believes to be a neutral, uninterpreted external world. (Oddly, the “Art-Language” group seems to share this characteristic.) The image, for him, is there to denote (*how* is unexplained) the mere presence of persons and objects who are intrinsically endowed with characteristics. His social-historicist discussion is thus carried on at the level of the public for TV soap opera, who might say “Wasn’t it awful the way he spoke to her last night?” He seems particularly happy and interesting discussing such visual phenomena as the male suit and its role in peasant life: this from interpreting the way people look wearing suits in old photographs.

BERGER’S DISCUSSION of Gainsborough’s National Gallery painting of Mr & Mrs Andrews is well known. It is, of course, acceptable for him to discuss at length the class-implications of this painting. Mr & Mrs Andrews are seated smugly

beside a vista of the rolling acres that they owned. What is quite unacceptable is for him to assume that what the *patrons* wished shown, it was the *artist’s* single aim to show. To begin with, the landowner cannot have expected his complacency, which so embarrasses us, to be so acutely shown. The real topic of a painting by an artist of Gainsborough’s stature goes far beyond the patron’s will. Unless it did, generations of us, who consciously disliked the implications of the subject, would not have appreciated the picture. It is not really convincing for Berger to tell us that class bias is enough to make us feel so positively about the work’s content.

The fundamental problem still remains for Berger: *how* does a sheet of canvas, smeared with coloured, oily pastes, look to him like two people of a certain kind in a landscape of a certain kind? He has never seen these people or this landscape or these silk pleats and trees. He is, of course, accepting the object as a focus for his own memories of *similar*, analogous memories. What Berger is talking about is what the picture makes him think about, and he puts it all together in a single experience; though for him those particular memories never were a single experience. He either forgets or chooses to forget that lower hierarchy of *gestalten* which are formally presented in the painter’s marks, sequences of form and structures. One is led to believe that his reading of art parallels a reading, say, of Joyce’s *Ulysses* which gives only a précis of the plot. There is actually a failure of realism.

The funny thing is that not only do we seem to be invited to disapprove morally of some of our very pleased responses to those forms and structures, on the grounds that the précis now seems politically tinted (though I don’t believe it is, in the way Berger describes); but we also seem to be asked for a kind of retrospective censorship. One wonders how Berger would view those generations of spectators who have loved Titian’s great mythologies, all the way up from their handling to their in-the-subject drama, without understanding the mythological references at all. Walter Benjamin knew better; and most sensible people in the art world today realise that the emotive polarisation implied in the views of Greenberg and Berger, each dismissive of what the other sees in art, is ridiculous. Art is there. The problem is to find the common ground. Social-historicist terminology and reading show as yet no signs of reaching it.

One of the strangest experiences one can have is to hear a politically committed theoretician (even though an artist himself) carefully skirting the necessity to explain *what* he thinks good about an assortment of works by artists whose styles differ totally, but whose ideological commitment happens to be the same as his own. The language of politics especially contains no terminologies and concepts

⁵ *About Looking*. By JOHN BERGER. Writers and Readers. £5.95, paper £2.95.

which are valid for the complete content or realised worlds of visual form. To read the content of art is *not* the same as to read text, however theoretical. The non-artistic art-historian, like the TV journalist, may draw quick, often throwaway parallels between the general impression given by a certain kind of art and more or less contemporary philosophy and/or music. But such parallels can only lie in very partial resemblances. The total reality of Titian's meaning, or Bach's meaning, or Kant's meaning can never be abstracted and subsumed into someone else's statement in quite other terms.

Decades ago, of course, a Germanic tradition would use such parallels as a means of conjuring up some such metaphysical monster as "the spirit of the age." Few people nowadays would give this a level of existence superior to that of men and their actual works. Even less useful is reference to public events that happen to be contemporary with works of art as if they "explained" them entirely by simple causality. TV presentations rely heavily on this mode—largely, one feels, because of the available libraries of film clips.

One of Berger's reissued books, *The Success and Failure of Picasso*,⁶ comes to the conclusion that that failure was an emotional failure of *iconographic* rather than formal invention, especially in Picasso's later years. There may be grounds for this belief; though I believe strongly in Picasso's late achievement. It is certainly true that Picasso painted, just like dozens of his predecessors, nudes on beds and beaches, portraits, couples; and in works such as *War* and *Joie de Vivre* he did indeed use iconography that, less "formalistically" presented, would be corny and sentimental; soldiers in black shoot at weeping women: happy, goat-like fauns gambol with outflung arms over green hills. (Peter Fuller, reporting on the Admass poster as a genuine present-day art form, would probably not regard this as in any way a relevant criticism.) Of course, in other works Picasso was a powerful iconographic inventor.

Occasionally Berger's efforts at reading pictures may hint at that common ground on which we can all stand, and from which we may make more valuable judgments about art and its affinities. In *The Success and Failure of Picasso*, he writes of a nude of 1932:

"The effect is magical: it is as though we, looking at these figures, possess their sensations. I am this woman as she sleeps. Yet the condition of such identification is the rejection of all intellectual conventions and systems... the question: What does this picture mean? is

⁶ *The Success and Failure of Picasso*. By JOHN BERGER. Writers and Readers, £7.95, paper £2.95.

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almost unanswerable. Or at least, the answer will at first sound like nonsense: it means being it."

What can Berger possibly mean by "being it"? A nearby caption to a 1939 Picasso even reads "I am that woman as she turns to see me." In a way he is right; but as they stand, with no frame of reference, Berger's expressions remain a sort of cant. How, one may ask, in what terms can one possibly "be" either a picture of a woman or (in Berger's point-missing way) the woman it is a picture of?

SUCH BOOKS, and the movements they represent, have one chief thing in common: they aim to transcribe the true content of art into an alien conceptual system.⁷ They deal with art not for the way it demonstrates and conveys a state of its own being, but as raw material to be classified externally, to be known about and calculated about. The Berger re-issues (to catch what looks at the moment like a Berger revival) make this particularly evident.

IT SEEMS THAT, having criticised other attitudes and readings, I have an obligation to try and suggest an alternative standpoint, from which the criticisms are made. To answer the questions this raises, one has to look into some general physiological and phenomenological considerations affecting perception as well as art.

Some of the issues about "modernism" may fall into place if one asks, "What is the 'content' of art, if it is not only in real things depicted?". The pure philosopher still does not, unfortunately, try to answer this—as we see in Richard Wollheim's *Art and Its Objects*.⁸ He too has an alien conceptual system, albeit laced with critical terms, which seems to frustrate his good intentions. Aesthetic philosophy remains concerned with its own integrity, not with the integrity of art. Nor does it answer the most urgent social questions about art.

In looking at a picture or sculpture which "is" something in its own right, one first has to decide whether one should actually look on it *as* art, i.e. treat it as a symbol, not as raw material to use for another job. A school of criticism cheered on by Clement Greenberg does not like going much further than this, but one cannot stop there if one wants to deal with all sorts of art, for in reality one never surveys any object without interpreting it—that could only be done by a lens with no mind behind it.

It seems likely that one does the surveying and interpreting by carrying out an electronically swift series of matchings through one's brain and neural

mechanisms. These analogue the forms which are sorted out and assembled by the present experience with many other experiences of the past that appear comparable. The matchings may be of many kinds, ranging from pure contour recognition to inner participation in implied acts. One explores internally ranges of *gestalten* of different types and, so so speak, "switches them in." The contents of concrete memory thus become in some way the content of the work; and the artist's skill is to define distinct forms and structures whose content it is the work's function to synthesise. The content includes readings of art as well as readings of reality—and by readings of reality I do not mean only the things of the everyday world, for the objects of aesthetic perception cross the boundaries of utilitarian object-classification.

In addition, one of the most important functions in the matching process is to reject some possible matches of form which, in reading the work, the context of other *gestalt*-matches does not validate. Both artist and reader of art need to refer the forms they read to several kinds of context. There is, for instance, the context of associated forms in the work (marks, shapes); the implied context in any represented world (garment, water); artistic tradition (conventions); and actual physical environment (gallery space, gilded hall, or bamboo hut). It is thus arguable that the value of any overt subject in a work lies in its ability to bring alive in artist and reader an unfamiliar world of forms, a "second nature."

ALL THIS HELPS TO CONDENSE the meaning of individual works. The collective of such meanings becomes part of the framework of our visual-tactile phenomenology, with its own categories and sets. Art-critical and school jargon interprets these nowadays in terms of language, though it seems essential that the phenomenological insight of the artist must always challenge and outstrip the prevailing visual language, or art remains cliché. (So phenomenology and language are not identical.) The referential content of any work as we look at it can only be internal to us; it resides nowhere else than in our personal human matrix of experience and form. Only there do we find the matches which make sense of the raw object, of what to the unprepared or barbarian eye remains a mere lump of stuff, like a book to someone who does not know what writing is.

The meanings of the works of art we have earlier read help to prepare the tallies of *gestalt*, and to activate the matches we may find in our memory-stock. All art, even the most apparently "naturalistic", can only refer each reader to his or her inner collection of comparable sets of form, synthesised so as to give us a visual definition of what it means to *be* (Berger's "I am that woman . . ."). The true propositions of art bind

⁷ *Art and Psychoanalysis*. By PETER FULLER. Writers and Readers, £5.95, paper £2.95.

⁸ *Art and Its Objects*. Second edition with six supplementary essays. By RICHARD WOLLHEIM. Cambridge University Press, £12.95.

together the affinities of feeling and the structures of intelligence. One does not go to Venice to check the "truth" of Canaletto or Turner. Their Venice is gone, anyway. What such painters have always done is convince us by appealing to our sense of the infinitely suggestive presence of the objective world, which our lifetime of attention, response, and integration has inculcated in us. Art synthesises what has come to us through our eyes and our hands as static and moving.

This conviction of total reality is probably even more essential for abstract or non-representational arts, even those which radically limit their fields. The exploration and synthesis they demand must operate within some region of truth, and, as Peter Fuller points out, work upon some kind of content; though that may be at levels of internal reference usually inhibited by social, personal, and previous artistic convention. This must have something to do with the myth of the anti-social artist, for healthy access to the full matrix of an experience may demand a life-style quite outside social (or political) control and approval.

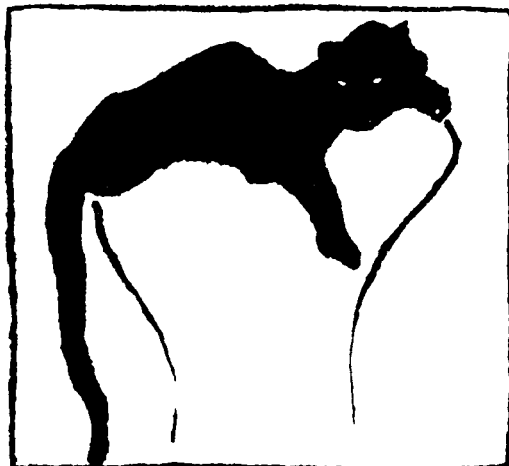
THE FERTILE SOIL from which artistic action springs is a realm of content of semantic reference which at bottom has nothing to do with words, spoken or written. The arts have their own units of sense. These refer to "realities" of interpreted perception for which no other symbolic indicators exist, and to which feelings may be the only key. Evocation has to be a legitimate avenue to truth.

The premises of visual-tactile grammars, with their functional structures, are likewise not bound by any means to those of verbal language. The levels of statement in which they move are many. There is the level of touch and handling, which may include kinetic perceptions rooted in sympathetic responses to movement. Between these elements emerge primary structures which appear as lines, continuities, and echoing series; as graphic shapes; as sequences of colour and plane, positive and negative enclosures; full and empty volumes; stereometrically defined masses and surfaces "developed" out of changing lines; different types of vector relationship, of group, of colour pitch and interaction, of represented objects and bodies, which themselves add up to significant appositions and assemblages—by implied physical gesture, maybe, and psychological emphasis; and so on through suggested fields of space and time. All these evoke matches from the matrix by analogue and metaphor. Condensing through them, the propositions of art work towards their own kind of truth.

Out of this complex there may emerge visual comparisons with the nouns and adjectives—perhaps the verbs—of speech, and with actors in human drama. At rare intervals in history these

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actors have been supposed somehow to "stand for" the "same" people who surround the artist. The social-historicist claims to read these elements as the prime, or even the only, material of art. A more generous view is that they indicate characteristic regions of human experience from which the artist and his presumed original readers were bound to draw many forms of feeling and knowledge. Dante and Piero della Francesca did so from their now vanished contemporary Catholic worlds. We read their work only by attentive reference to experience of our own that we can summon up to flesh out their propositions.

One may reasonably assume that art calls for an independent literacy. Its contents may be as varied as those of any other groups of language. It can talk about whatever it likes, in its own terms. The justification of any literacy is that it enables the literate to see, register, and integrate more of their worlds than the non-literate can. A language does not mirror passively; it is an active imaging of the world. We live the world as we understand it, cut up and assembled by the phenomenology conveyed in the languages of our culture. We capture our reality in nets of interpretation. A badly woven, coarse net catches less than a well-made one. A fine net of visual language enables us to comprehend the largest range possible within the physical and historical limitations of our life, for these limitations

only circumscribe; they do not totally define.

An individual or a society with impoverished visual culture can be, in a radical sense, blind to its own reality. Feeble arts generate feeble visual understanding. The visually illiterate simply do not see what the literate see; nor do they find it easy to understand the point of literacy. The languages of art have no real analogue to the lively spoken utterance of the street, the café, or the bedroom to sustain them. What they do have in major art is the analogue to major poetry, each nourishing the life of its own form of language. Just as the complex web of metaphor and idiom in the language of poetry and vivid speech ultimately validates, even enlarges, the pragmatic language of everyday business, so too can the languages of art validate their own pragmatic versions—reading via, say, topology or diagram into design of all kinds.

One of the symptoms of tyranny in Western societies has been the progressive and often deliberate deformation of its living languages according to schematic interpretations of reality, negating the levels of unverballed truth which underpin the more overt propositions of art. Serious questions we are going to have to answer for our society are: where and how are *our* languages of art to be kept alive, and what role is government to play in this? Contrary to what some people may believe, the arts are no mere luxury.

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A Flow of Images

Robert Hughes on Modern Art—By EDWARD LUCIE-SMITH

ROBERT HUGHES' swashbuckling book on the history of modernism in the visual arts—and no other adjective will do for it—grew out of his BBC television series of the same title.¹ To say that it bears the marks of its origins may sound snide, but in this context I mean it simply as a statement of fact. By writing his book in connection with a series of TV programmes, Hughes has reaped both advantages and disadvantages.

The advantages can perhaps be summed up in the one word "infrastructure." A big television series is, when compared to mere authorship, a gigantic and complex enterprise. The budget makes all sorts of things possible which would not be possible for an author working on his own. For example, extensive travel, and the opportunity to look at things on the spot. For another example, the services of a team of researchers, ready to try and fill in any cloudy corner the author may discover in his thesis. On the evidence presented here, Hughes has made good use of these facilities. He remains very much in control of his own text—style, manner and attitude are all personal—but there is often a kind of density and concreteness which takes time; your own time, or somebody else's. Television has offered him the means to be solid without being dull.

Just occasionally, however, there are signs that too many cooks have had a hand in the enterprise. The text, usually admirably succinct, slips out of focus, and the metaphors become a little hectic. In constructing his book Hughes has been forced to follow the plan of the series that gave it birth, and his eight sections, with their catchy titles ("The Landscape of Pleasure", "Trouble in Utopia", "The Threshold of Liberty"), correspond to the individual programmes on which they are based. Each of these sections revolves around some dominant idea—art and the machine, art and totalitarianism, art and the failure of modern architecture to provide a livable environment for the masses. This works somewhat better on the small screen than it does in print. One does not notice gaps in logic so acutely when one is confronted by a seductive flow of images, rushing by at a pace chosen by the makers of the film, and not by

oneself. Nor does one get entangled—there isn't time or opportunity—in trying to work out the niceties of historical sequence. For reasons of thematic convenience, Willem de Kooning is ruthlessly separated from the rest of the American Abstract Expressionists, with whom he undoubtedly belongs seen purely from a historical point of view. The awkwardness is noticeable in print, but wouldn't have been nearly so conspicuous in the programmes themselves. Just occasionally one has to check with something much more plodding, such as Norbert Lynton's recently published *The Story of Modern Art*,² in order to relocate oneself in the historical context.

There is also a more insidious fault. Every now and then, as the smooth flow of the narrative takes an unexpected jink, one is aware that the author is trying to accommodate an image which doesn't very precisely illustrate what he is in fact trying to say. One imagines, perhaps unfairly, that these are the points at which the experience of writing the book has somehow fallen out of step with the way in which it was planned to be written. The images were all there, cut and dried, a long time before a single word of *this* text was set down. Perhaps, in the course of writing this, or even in the course of preparing his scripts, Hughes wanted to change his mind over some points of interpretation. But the nature of the enterprise doesn't allow him to do so. He is forced to argue to a brief.

SO MUCH FOR the way in which *The Shock of the New* has been put together. What does it actually say? It turns out that Hughes is arguing—and indeed a good many of us have been arguing for a long time—that the modern movement in the arts is more or less coming to an end. What was a living force is slipping away from us into the past, and will soon have put on the solemn robes of a recognised historical style—Modernism will be spoken of much as we now speak of the Baroque, or Mannerism, or Neo-Classicism. From Hughes' point of view, this argument is a convenient one, because it enables him to present his subject as a complete entity—with a beginning, a middle and an end. It also enables him to dissociate himself from the follies of the modernists (thus keeping his credibility with the ordinary viewer or the ordinary reader) while still playing heartfelt tribute to their achieve-

¹ *The Shock of the New*. By ROBERT HUGHES. BBC Publications, £15.50; Alfred A. Knopf, \$29.95.

² *The Story of Modern Art*. By NORBERT LYNTON. Phaidon, £13.95; Cornell University Press, \$35.00.

ments. Yet Hughes argues the case too passionately, and with too much evident commitment, for one to feel that he has adopted this particular stance as a matter of simple convenience.

He seems to see the Modern Movement as being something which will leave behind it many incidental achievements—individual works of art of the finest quality, comparable to anything produced at previous epochs—but which must finally be thought of as a failure. And in his eyes this failure is largely a social one. He finds it much easier to forgive modern painters and sculptors for their inability always to live up to their announced ideals than to extend the same forgiveness to modern architects. The figure who both fascinates and repels him is Le Corbusier, and his discussion of the Unité d'Habitation in Marseilles is full of barely controlled nausea, prompted both by his vision of the life the architect expected people to live in his giant building, and also by the way in which they actually do live (which contradicts so many of Le Corbusier's Utopian expectations). In these passages Hughes comes across both as a pragmatist and as an elitist, the perfect high priest for a consumer society with an uneasy conscience.

His elitism does, however, have some salutary consequences. During the most recent phase of modernism there has been considerable pressure put on commentators to surrender all value judgments as being somehow old-fashioned and out of place, and above all unfair to the artist. Hughes will have none of this. Even the most famous of modern artists are sharply rapped over the knuckles for falling away from their own high standards. Both Miró and Dubuffet, for instance, are reproached for the commercialism of their recent work, while (especially in Miró's case) receiving ample praise for what they did earlier. Hughes sees very clearly that one of the problems of modern art, certainly for its future historians, is the fact that everything gets preserved, that we no longer allow time and accident to go about their cleansing task of separating the good from the indifferent.

THE KIND OF MODERN ART Hughes likes best, and it emerges from the awestruck tone of some of his descriptions, is clearly the pioneering work done by Post-Impressionists, Fauves and Cubists. Here he feels at home, amid paintings and sculptures which are already established as unassailable classics—one can talk of Seurat's *La Grande Jatte* in much the same tones that one uses to describe a Botticelli or a Poussin. It is not the merit of the work which is in question, only what kind of merit it is. But he is a better cicerone when he is skating on much thinner ice.

As art critic of *Time*, he is necessarily very much

involved in the New York art-scene—and New York, the most publicity-conscious place on earth, is a city where critics of all kinds count for a good deal more than they do here. Art critics in particular stand much higher in the pecking order than they could possibly hope to do in England, because New York is still very conscious of its role as an art-metropolis, the place where all the latest styles are to be found, and where most of them originate. In this milieu *Time* is very powerful, but it is not necessarily respected in the way that the *New York Times* and *The New Yorker* are respected when they make pronouncements about the visual arts. *Time* is too brash for that, and Hughes is evidently keenly aware that his role is that of the Great Satan, who exists to be placated and secretly abused. Add to this another fact—that he is an Australian working in America—and one sees why some of his pronouncements about the great names of American post-War art seem to be hedged about with qualifications he does not feel called upon to use elsewhere.

Yet, just because he is treading on what for him is dangerous ground, and dealing, in addition, with art of whose worth he is less dogmatically sure, he writes particularly well when discussing this kind of material—not least because it is thoroughly familiar as well as being potentially explosive. His analyses of painters like Clifford Styll and Barnett Newman are models of their kind, and it is only a pity that his rather dogmatic scheme does not allow him to deal with Edward Hopper, who is now coming more and more to look like one of the pivotal figures in American 20th-century art.

In general, realism is somewhat short-changed in his book—Balthus rates only a couple of mentions, though one is in the Introduction, where Hughes informs us of what he is deliberately having to set aside. Where realism does rate some discussion is at the very end of the text, where there is talk of “a realist revival” in the art of the last decade. Here for once Hughes falls into a trap which he is otherwise clever enough and well-informed enough to avoid: he interprets a shift of attention on the part of the audience, and especially that part of it which considers itself to belong to “the art world”, as a shift of gravity within art itself. It isn't so—it would be easy enough to construct a history of 20th-century realism, running continuously from 1900 to the present day, with nothing but artists of real merit to illustrate it.

Hughes rarely opts for stereotypes in this way—his breeziness, his liking for a showy phrase, and his undoubted charm (which comes across almost as powerfully in the book as it does on the screen)—all these count for much less in the scales than his intelligence and his independence. It is delightful that he should characterise David Hockney—and not unjustly at that—as “the Cole Porter of figurative painting” (though often taken

for its Mozart); but there are a thousand judgments on individual artists which are no less just, though on occasion less strikingly expressed. It is a real pleasure to read a book on modern art (which in its

time has fathered so much bad prose and done so much damage to the English language) as well written and as sensible as this one. I enjoyed it enormously, and I also felt a pang of envy.

Ways of Looking Back

Architectural Books—By J. M. RICHARDS

SOON AFTER I began editing the *Architectural Review* I commissioned from John Betjeman—I think it was in the summer of 1939—an article about the many types of building, mostly of the 19th century, which, while embellishing the English scene, were yet despised by those who equated good architecture with text-book examples of the historic styles. He wrote an entertaining piece, satirising in turn the blinkered outlook of the antiquarian, of the academic architect and of the dedicated modernist. John Piper drew the pictures. Betjeman left me to give his article a title, and the title I chose was “The Seeing Eye, or How to Like Everything”, which sufficiently described its point of view but was meant to imply something more: the changing trend of opinion which was then beginning to extend connoisseurship of architecture, when helped by an unprejudiced eye, far beyond the limits of orthodox historiography.

The same trend has now become, 40 years afterwards, one of the characteristics of our own day. What started in the 1930s as a mere disturbance of stagnant waters has become a flood. Not only is there a wide interest in vernacular buildings, but the cycle of taste in architecture generally has taken to revolving so fast that it stops nowhere. The Victorian Society is as active as the Georgian Group and in its turn has been outdated by the Thirties Society. Indignation at the destruction last year of the neo-Egyptian Firestone Factory on the Great West Road, built in the 1920s, was more prominently reported in the press than were the protests against J. L. Pearson’s proposal to rebuild Peterborough Cathedral in 1884.

This anxiety to be *au courant* with everything, and the accompanying merger of historiography with aesthetic appreciation, is reflected in the half-dozen new architectural books I have in front of me. The merger is all to the good in the sense that it is a victory for the freedom of the eye. It is not altogether new, for the best historians have always understood that aesthetic appreciation and knowledge must go hand in hand. Nikolaus Pevsner, who has done more than anyone else to cause 19th-century buildings to be looked at with

the same eyes, and judged by the same criteria, as the buildings of earlier epochs, lost no opportunity (for example in his *Buildings of England*) to record their visual qualities, even though Betjeman and others used to refer to him with scorn as the *Herr Doktor*, unjustly ranking him with the proverbial German scholar digging only for facts.

I remember Pevsner returning from a visit to Oxford just after the War, when the process of learning to like everything was just getting under way. He had gone there to give one of his first lectures on Victorian architecture and he described to me how entertained he had been to observe that his gratifyingly large audience consisted, as he had been able to discern from its reaction to his lecture, of three quite distinct groups: those whose taste had been formed in the Victorian age (there were many such in the Oxford of 35 years ago) and who therefore found it natural that Pevsner should refer to buildings like the Albert Memorial when he set out to discuss the art of architecture; those (at that time the largest group) belonging to the generation that had reacted against the Victorians and who got ready to laugh at the witticisms they were sure would follow when he began to speak of the Albert Memorial; and finally those very few who were unprejudiced enough to take seriously an analysis of an important monument even though it had been designed in 1867.

Another outcome of the merger of historiography with connoisseurship is that in our time historians have very largely replaced journalists as the influential architectural critics. This at least has one advantage: subjective emotional reactions are disciplined by some understanding of cause and effect. Instead of changes in style being greeted as peculiar accidents like changes in the weather, they are seen as part of a chain of influences—cultural, technical and social.

I must be careful how I introduce the last of these three factors, because I now come to one of our younger architectural historians, who is not only a severe critic of recent trends in architecture but has led several of the still younger generation to join him in disparaging all reference to social

factors as influencing architecture, taking the opposite direction to that travelled by Ruskin. He is thus especially antagonistic to the aims as well as the products of what is now called the Modern Movement.

DAVID WATKIN first put forward his views three years ago in a short book—an expert piece of pamphleteering—entitled *Morality and Architecture*. It attracted a lot of notice, deservedly because it stated a point of view that made a refreshing contrast with the social utopianism which had coloured much writing about modern architecture and, following Karl Popper in another context, it questioned the usefulness of looking at history in terms of concerted cultural movements. But it was tendentious in places and, like much polemical writing, made too many of its points by selective quotation. It is easy to condemn another writer by quoting something he may have written many years ago in a different context as though he would have meant it to apply today.

I write as one of those he quoted selectively, but my own objection to *Morality and Architecture* when I read it had nothing to do with my being given a place, along with Nikolaus Pevsner, in Dr Watkin's architectural pandemonium. My first objection was that, although almost the sole occupant of his architectural pantheon was evidently the late Geoffrey Scott, this was implied rather than stated. The thesis of Dr Watkin's book was, by and large, that of Geoffrey Scott's *The Architecture of Humanism*, and yet this epoch-making book was hardly mentioned. It was in fact mentioned once, and Geoffrey Scott's name occurred once in the index, something I increasingly resented as I read what Dr Watkin had written, because Geoffrey Scott had many years ago been one of my heroes, as he was to all the most thoughtful students of my generation.

The Architecture of Humanism was published in 1914 but its impact was somewhat blunted by the war. It was reissued in 1924, the year in which I began to study architecture. I and my contemporaries were much influenced by it and argued about it passionately, especially because we also read and were influenced by Ruskin. Scott rejected Ruskin's insistence on linking architecture with ethics, and made ethics the subject of one of the series of fallacies (the mechanical and the romantic fallacies were others) on which he based his main argument and his case for treating the classical as architecture's outstanding achievement. That was a thesis that came more naturally in 1914 than in

1977. Architectural writers had not yet been persuaded to like everything. Today the problem is that we are hardly allowed to dislike anything. Dr Watkin, I do not think it is unfair to add, shares Geoffrey Scott's one defect as a debater: a propensity towards setting up his own Aunt Sallys in order to knock them over. I have already drawn attention to his failure, in *Architecture and Morality*, to acknowledge that Scott set up the same Aunt Sallys—and knocked them over—first.

Now he has fully made amends. The new edition of *The Architecture of Humanism* is edited by Dr Watkin and has an admirable foreword contributed by him.¹ This usefully places Scott—the friend of Maynard Keynes, Will Rothenstein and Edith Wharton, and the protégé of Bernard Berenson—in the context of his period, and it skilfully analyses Scott's "intensely aesthetic" approach to architecture and especially his role in the re-evaluation of the Baroque.

DAVID WATKIN has followed up this timely reassessment of Geoffrey Scott's major work with *The Rise of Architectural History*,² another short book of his own, in which he sets out to summarise the nature and influence of historical writing about architecture from the 17th century onwards, concerning himself in the main with writing in England but alluding also to significant writing elsewhere, notably in Germany. This is a fascinating subject, so much so that it is surprising no one has tackled it in this way before. Dr Watkin has produced a very readable narrative, compressing a lot of well-digested information into very few pages. His is an impressive feat of scholarship in which his sarcasms at the expense of modernism play a smaller part than in his earlier book.

It is nevertheless worth dwelling on some of these for a moment longer because in Dr Watkin's writings, as in those of the other young historians who share his antagonism towards the discussion of architecture as serving a social as well as an aesthetic purpose, the Modern Movement is for the first time being written about by critics who were neither part of it nor contemporary with it; who no longer have memory to guide them. This has the advantage that they are freed from any emotional allegiance such as might discourage an older critic from disowning a portion of his own past. On the other hand it is already evident that errors and over-simplifications have begun to creep in.

The naive optimism of the 1930s, and again of the immediate post-War period, is fair game. But those who supported the Modern Movement did not really believe that good architecture automatically arose from enlightened social or advanced political ideologies. Nor had they the faith in the example set by Russia that Dr Watkin

¹ *The Architecture of Humanism*. By GEOFFREY SCOTT. Architectural Press, £7.95, paper £4.25.

² *The Rise of Architectural History*. By DAVID WATKIN. Architectural Press, £8.95.

likes to pretend. Russia had in fact already turned its back on the principles of the Modern Movement. More important, few of the Modern Movement architects were politically motivated. Their allegiances would be an interesting subject for research, but I think the result would surprise those of today's historians who insist on regarding the Modern Movement as a kind of Left-wing conspiracy.

The extent to which they sympathised with the Left was determined mainly by the Left political parties being the only ones interested in planning; that is to say territorial planning, which hardly existed before the 1930s. The younger architects felt strongly about the need to eradicate ribbon development and the formless sprawl of suburbs; they wanted to become involved in low-cost housing policies and slum clearance—all matters in which the architectural establishment wanted no part—and planning was an essential element of the Left-wing parties' platform. According to my recollection few members of the Modern Architectural Research Group were engaged politically in any other sense, unless you count most people's general concern at the rise of Fascism in Europe. Some indeed were more inclined to the Right than to the Left. I can think of only three or four who were Marxists and one of the most convinced Marxists resigned from the

Group soon after its formation for ideological reasons. Politics were not discussed at MARS Group meetings.

ANOTHER MISAPPREHENSION about the English modernists, again evident in Dr Watkin's account of the 1930s, is that those who revered Le Corbusier agreed with everything he wrote. This was not so. Many of the young who were inspired by his work as an architect distrusted his theories of urban design and said so. It is therefore misleading to assume that his unrealistically utopian town-planning studies had a central place in the credo of the Modern Movement. This is not to say that the wrong-headed belief in comprehensive redevelopment, sweeping away everything in its path, was not a disastrous aspect of English architecture in the 1950s, when modernism was in the ascendancy. But the finances of property development were the impetus behind it far more than the theories of Le Corbusier. And the sweepers-away were often the so-called traditionalists. It was Sir Reginald Blomfield who planned to destroy Carlton House Terrace and the members of the MARS Group who banded together to save it.

Le Corbusier wrote a lot of nonsense, but he was an artist in the manipulation of geometrical form. His use of the classical device of "regulating lines"

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JOHN MURRAY

to control the proportions of his buildings and the relationship of the parts to the whole gives him the right to claim descent from the classical masters. The defects of the idiom Le Corbusier strove to establish have nothing to do with utopianism or constructivist theory, and still less to do with politics. They lie in its obsession with rationalism and its failure to show itself capable of broadening into a publicly acceptable vernacular language, as the English renaissance idiom of Wren broadened into the Georgian vernacular. The good modern buildings are those of the star modern architects.

TO MOVE ON FROM these two slim volumes is to enter the heavyweight class with a vengeance. *Meaning in Western Architecture*,³ by Christian Norberg-Schulz, must be passed over fairly quickly because it has been well known as an historical exposition of the existentialist school of architectural philosophy since it first appeared in English six years ago, following the same author's *Intentions in Architecture* of 1963. We now have a paper-back re-issue. The language used by this Norwegian writer is stiff and inelegant—at least in translation—but he has a valued place as an interpreter of the evolution of architecture in terms of the symbolism of space, implying an acceptance of Hegelian metaphysics.

Meaning in Western Architecture was first published in Italian in 1974, and in English in 1975. The next two books on my list appeared in 1980 and together make that a memorable year for architectural writing. Roger Scruton's *The Aesthetics of Architecture*⁴ is the most thorough examination of its subject from the post-Hegelian point of view that I know. Whether aesthetics can be satisfactorily dealt with when divorced from the other considerations that determine the appearance of buildings has been settled, at least to Geoffrey Scott's and David Watkin's satisfaction, in Scott's chapter on "The Ethical Fallacy" and need not be repeated here.

Like Geoffrey Scott, Dr Scruton draws the greater part of his illustrations from classical architecture, on which he discourses admirably. His is a closely argued thesis, and I am tempted to touch only on the passing comments he makes on the theme of this review, namely the inability of writers of a later generation than those of the Modern Movement to treat it with a true historian's detachment. I suppose an historian should be

allowed his dislikes, but too brisk and dismissive a way of expressing them is a defect in a major contribution to learning.

Dr Scruton, to take one instance, enlarges on what he calls "the medicinal aesthetics of Scandinavia" by illustrating two table-forks, one Swedish and the other traditional, and naturally finds no difficulty in demonstrating that the latter, with many years of evolution behind it, is the more functional. But that is not to be disputed and I do not think the designers of the former would have claimed otherwise. He has jumped to the conclusion that the aim of all design in the modern style was to be functional, whereas the designers of new patterns of fork, like the designers of many modern buildings, were equally concerned with presenting a fresh image; with getting away from the routine use of a classical vocabulary which, when it becomes too familiar, ceases to provide any aesthetic stimulus. In the hands of the academic architects of the 1920s and 1930s this vocabulary had become debased into a set of stale clichés. The only remedy was to introduce fresh images. That these were found in the new structural techniques and machine-produced materials does not mean that their whole justification lies in the practicality or production economy these generally offered. Liking one thing, in any case, need not exclude the simultaneous liking of quite different things.

FROM ITS TITLE one might expect Joseph Rykwert's *The First Moderns*⁵ to be about the pioneers whose products now seem to have reached a nadir of popularity. But not at all. The choice of title is one of the many perversities in an original and stimulating book. By *The First Moderns* Professor Rykwert does not mean the Le Corbusiers or even the Otto Wagners who were endeavouring to replace the tired language of, say, Sir Edwin Cooper by a language from which the eye could draw fresh stimulus. He means the European architects of the 18th century; for he is concerned to show how architecture, and especially neo-classical architecture, reflected the revolution in intellectual thought which characterised that century. His main story is about the intellectual development of an age, and about the strands of history which, interwoven, determined the pattern of its architecture.

One of the delights, and one of the difficulties, of Professor Rykwert's writing is the wide range of his learning and the insights he provides by unexpected excursions and analogies. He embraces a wonderful range of topics from garden design to the Temple of Solomon and from archaeology to Grand Lodge Masonry. Claude Perrault is his hero (if he has one). His style is dense and demanding, sometimes compressed to the point of obscurity. The pages of

³ *Meaning in Western Architecture*. By CHRISTIAN NORBERG-SCHULZ. Studio Vista, £7.95.

⁴ *The Aesthetics of Architecture*. By ROGER SCRUTON. Methuen, £12.50, paper £6.95.

⁵ *The First Moderns*. By JOSEPH RYKWERT. M.I.T. Press, £27.50, \$45.00.

notes at the end of each chapter—the chapter-titles, again, are either perverse or baffling—are a history-book in themselves. The chapter on England is the longest. It runs to 76 pages which are followed by no fewer than 64 pages of notes. It is called “Initiates to Amateurs” and has its own unexpected hero in the person of the Elizabethan geometrician and cosmographer John Dee; it makes a good case for regarding Dee as the first Englishman, long before Inigo Jones, to have appreciated the essence of classical architecture. Professor Rykwert presents us with the real architecture of humanism, and *The First Moderns*, in spite of its obscurities, could provide historical writing with a revivifying blood transfusion.

In a very different category is *Architecture of the Western World*.⁶ Our generation’s coffee-tables have become loaded with volumes on the history of architecture, which is no bad thing if it indicates a growing popular interest in buildings, even though it may be an interest in looking backwards rather

than forwards. Those who deplore the Modern Movement must at least agree that it served the useful purpose of putting a stop to the habit of regarding the study of history as concerned mainly with providing models for practising architects to copy.

The puzzling thing about this ceaseless flow of picture-books is that so many of them cover almost the same ground. They vary, of course, in breadth of coverage, accuracy, readability, and the choice and quality of their illustrations. This newest example, with text by eight different authors, has an adequate if pedestrian text, which seems to become more pedestrian as it approaches our own time. Printed in Hong Kong, it has plenty of pictures in colour—rather too warm colour, but high marks for this nevertheless. The colour appears on the text pages instead of in the form of inset plates separated from their text references. High marks for this too. The book begins with classical Greece and ends with the familiar monuments, in Europe, America and Japan, of the Modern Movement. There is no suggestion of any alternative to the latter as the style proper to our day. So low marks, I am afraid, from Dr Watkin.

⁶ *Architecture of the Western World*. Edited by MICHAEL RAEBURN. Orbis Publishing, £16.00.

Tears in the Mind’s Eye

From David to Pissarro—By MARINA WARNER

IN THE MIDDLE OF THE 19TH CENTURY, Baudelaire produced a prime text of modernism and a decisive epitaph on the Academy: “The more art seeks to be philosophically clear, the more it will become degraded and go back to [the condition of] a child’s hieroglyph; on the other hand, the more art is separated from teaching, the more it rises to pure, disinterested beauty.” And so, in explaining how deeply impressed and moved he was by David’s icon of revolutionary propaganda, the famous *Marat* assassinated in his bath, he ended his description with an excuse: “our tears are not dangerous.”

Baudelaire was convinced that the thousands of people who would be moved by the picture of the dead terrorist, with its clear philosophical message, would have been taught nothing, if teaching means that the lesson registers and changes something. His conclusion was probably more annihilating of the principles of academic classicism than the scorching disdain he showed for the other academicians’ skills.

We are so much the inheritors of the mid-19th-century conviction that the content of a painting matters less than the painter’s way of seeing, and the distinctive touch of hand and coloration of palette, that we wear our imperviousness to didacticism with indifference. At least Baudelaire knew that David was trying to manipulate. He called him “*l’héroïque, l’inflexible David, le révélateur despote*.” He was close enough to know. It is one of the great qualities of Anita Brookner’s study, *Jacques-Louis David*,¹ that for us who no longer know she restores David to his context, so that we see the sterile cold splendours of this important painter against the tumult of the Revolution, the rise of Napoleon, the establishment of his Empire, and his fall. David was born in 1748 and died in 1825. He signed the death warrant of Louis XVI, he organised the grandiose spectacles, the ersatz religious mystery dramas of the Revolution; he was appointed Napoleon’s *Premier Peintre*, and painted for him the *grandes machines* of his Coronation and other triumphs; and he died in exile in Belgium, though he could have returned home if he’d bent his pride a little.

The surface of his public life is full of accident.

¹ *Jacques-Louis David*. By ANITA BROOKNER. Chatto & Windus, £25.00.

Underneath, there's a swamp of false rhetoric and broken faith. He served many masters with wild enthusiasm. On meeting Bonaparte he declared him his hero. Ingenuousness is a kind word for his condition, for he served the Terror well, on the Committee of Public Safety and in the National Convention; he almost ceased to paint in those years (though he did the *Marat*) because he was so busy signing warrants for arrest and the guillotine. Robespierre was a friend, but when his fall was imminent, David stayed away from the Convention. When they sent for him, he pleaded illness. Later, the cock crowed for Robespierre when David declared, "I'm not the only person who made a mistake over him. Many citizens thought him virtuous, as I did." Before Robespierre had entered the Convention to make his last speech in self-defence, David, the heroic, the inflexible, had promised, "If you drink hemlock, I'll drink with you."

David's paintings are illustrations of just such glorious sentiments. And as empty. Their emptiness is not dull, however, and that is why Baudelaire is perhaps wrong when he says that the tears we shed in front of them are not dangerous. His paintings of scenes from the antique are empty in the way that lies are empty: they are not devoid of meaning, any more than his assurance to Robespierre was void of meaning. The meaning is in the falsehood.

ANITA BROOKNER'S HERMENEUTICS are at times brilliant: her chapter on *The Oath of the Horatii* reads like a thriller. The painting of three heroes taking an oath with arms upraised to the sword another warrior dangles before them, while the women and children sit huddled in grief to one side, became a standard for the Revolution, for love of country before love of family. Its content is now entirely opaque, and the power of the image works through its centripetal dynamism. When you understand, as you do after Dr Brookner has unpicked David's weave, the painting becomes less powerful. For all David's accomplished borrowing of redemptive iconography (*Ecce Homo*), we cannot surrender to pity with the same degree of commitment, since we know that the victim in the bath is Marat. And when we learn that the story of the Horatii is about a man who, reproached by his sister for killing her lover in battle, runs her through on the spot for lack of patriotism and is then upheld in his action by his father and his tribe, our response to the sublime heroics of the ecstatic pledge David has painted becomes more equivocal.

Dr Brookner writes that David was a man "*en délire*", and she describes the cold flame of his passion in fine admiration. She concludes that he was "the most fallible, the most human of painters. He possessed in abundance what Tolstoy calls 'the necessary weakness', and also its indispensable

corollary, the endless desire of the heart. . . ." She includes him among Stendhal's Happy Few:

" . . . those who remain emotionally alive, who never compromise, who never succumb to cynicism or the routine of the second-hand. The Happy Few are not necessarily happy, but they are never corrupted and rarely bored. The Happy Few possess what Baudelaire calls '*impeccable naïveté*', the ability to see the world always afresh. . . . For the Happy Few, art and life are indistinguishable."

Reading this envoi to David leaves the reader at a loss. Can this painter be the one whom Dr Brookner has herself exposed in his pusillanimousness, compromise, and emotional necrophilia? These aspects of his character translate into the work, with the exception of the portraits, for throughout his long career the depiction of the human face seemed to abolish in David the need to present an intellectual programme of how he wished the world to be. The portraits of his youth, right through to the portraits painted in exile in Belgium, have not been muzzled or distorted by considerations of rhetoric or "philosophy." His insatiable desire to adulate, to prostrate his imagination before some bombastic ideal, was exorcised. Perhaps painting an ordinary mortal from the life seemed so distant from David's pursuit of the ideal that there was no point in falsification any more.

FALSIFICATION is a difficult word to use of painting, since all painting is false—a trick, an illusion. But David yielded again and again to what Dr Brookner calls "a frequently experienced temptation: to dignify one's own imperatives", to present things as they "ought" to be. David's imperatives result in a series of extraordinarily disturbing antitheses.

He takes flesh, most vulnerable sign of our mortal condition, and turns it to stone. The subjects he picks from the Classics are cruel: the Sabine Women, the Death of Socrates, Leonidas before Thermopylae. He usually chooses a moment when violence is not taking place, but impending, so that the promise of the picture is death. No wonder Marat is so well painted: David treated the body like still life. Clive Bell, writing in 1931, was funny about this.

"Artists are rarely better for dictation of any sort, and the ideas which the dictator David promulgated were peculiarly unhelpful to painters. Subject he held to be of the highest importance, and subjects, he held, should when possible be drawn from classical history or mythology. But whencesoever drawn they should be treated as though they were bits of Greco-Roman sculpture, and the naked human

form, the proper study of artists, should be bounded by a sharp insensitive line so as to look as far as possible as though it had been cut out of some hard material. . . ."

David's mortician style is not the result of ineptitude. He was consummately skilful, and chose it as a style because, as he said early on, "I felt that to copy nature indiscriminately was to do a vulgar job. . . ." After he was left out in the cold by the later Revolutionaries, he wearily declared, "I'll no longer become attached to people, only to principles." His principles meant he kept on changing allegiance, but the style of declamatory artifice, the oracular style of a prophet who maintains there is rarely truth in things as they are, did not change. Stendhal, far from including David among the Happy Few, complained that his paintings of antique warriors were absurd since they could never have fought so naked and exposed. He shuddered at the antithesis of flesh and steel, at David's characteristic antinomy of death and life. It's a trivial comment, in a sense, though it is the observation of a man who felt the pity of war to a degree David could not.

IN THE YEAR BEFORE David died, Eugène Delacroix, aged 24, wrote with characteristic energy, "I believe that when one needs a subject, it is best not to hark back to the classics and to choose something there. For really, what could be more stupid?" Of course Delacroix did so, time and time again. Yet this inconsistency points to the genuineness of the man, who did not strain to reduce the flux and ambiguities of experience to a homogenous programme, who saw that even when Liberty in all her glory leads the people, many are trampled underfoot.

The abridged 1951 edition by Hubert Wellington of *The Journal of Eugène Delacroix*² has been reissued in a bulky paperback with black and white illustrations that, given the scale and busyness of Delacroix's work, can only act as a rather fuzzy guide. To our great misfortune, the turbulent years 1830–48 are missing, since Delacroix's vivid manner of meditation on contemporary events and personalities would have enriched our understanding, not only of those paintings of his that appear "revolutionary", but of the 1830 and 1848 revolutions themselves. In the opening passage to the year 1849, he gives us a typically acute glimpse of the sacked Tuileries:

"Signs of dilapidation, and revolting smells everywhere. The ex-King's bed with the soiled

² *The Journal of Eugène Delacroix*. Edited by HUBERT WELLINGTON. Translated by LUCY NORTON. Phaidon, £6.95; Cornell University Press, \$12.95.

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linen he had been sleeping in, and the Queen's bed in the same state. A heap of broken furniture in the theatre, jewel-boxes forced open, battered wardrobes and so forth. Everywhere, portraits had been slashed to pieces. . . ."

Baudelaire thought consistently highly of Delacroix's painting, and praised the variety and the richness of his character too, especially in the encomium he wrote after his death in 1863. He concentrated on the quality in Delacroix that also comes over clearly in the *Journal*: that he created mood, that he conjured atmosphere in a manner akin to music, that he was *suggestive* and refrained from definable didactic content. Delacroix's writing matches the restless, passionate voraciousness of his art. He observed with intense curiosity and attentiveness, but always retained the impartial honesty of someone whose passions are not often engaged on the plane of actuality. He makes many notes on life in the Second Empire that are vivid, pithy, sometimes bizarre. There is a reek of dead rat at a private concert of Mozart's symphony in C; he enjoys the "vulgar orchestra" at a ball, and the "little shop assistants fluttering about in their fine clothes. I am sure that only in Paris can one get such a thrill from this kind of thing."

Delacroix loved music, and he writes uncommonly well of the deep excitement and solace he experienced at the opera, hearing Rossini,

Cimarosa, and above all Mozart. "Mozart is undoubtedly the creator", he wrote, "I will not say of modern art, since none is being produced at the present time, but of art carried to its highest point, beyond which no further perfection is possible." His vigorous discussions of Rubens, Michelangelo, Ingres are always interesting, and he is unpretentious, with a taste for homely metaphors. Of Rubens, who affected him very deeply, he writes that one of his good pictures is "like a good dish. . . . How many magnificent compositions would be worthless without a pinch of salt from the hand of the great cook."

THE JOURNAL reveals him to be a man of great capacity, of intellect, emotional response, loyalty in friendship, aesthetic discernment. It also shows how totally committed he was to the observer's stance: he was a watcher, not a participator. Even Baudelaire, who praised Delacroix's ability to express pain, above all "*la douleur morale*", moral pain, regretted the artist's lack of attachment to women and his frank dislike of children. But because of his qualities of intelligence and sympathy, Delacroix transformed voyeurism into action, the act of painting. His energy abounded. In 1852, he wrote:

"These days, no sooner do I take up my pen than ideas come flocking into my mind. . . . Surely it must be the same with painting. Otherwise, why is it that nowadays I never know a moment's boredom when I have a brush in my hand, and feel that if only I had enough strength I should never stop painting, except to eat and sleep?"

His appetite for imagery was large and eclectic, and he repudiated hardly any subject matter as inappropriate. He comments ardently many times on art's capacity to transform. "How strange painting is", he exclaims, "it delights us with representations of objects that are not pleasing in themselves. . . ."

This Baudelairean ability to choose subject-matter on the dark side led Delacroix to the fruitful contemplation of savagery. The Jardin des Plantes was one of his favourite haunts, and he sometimes complains that the lions were too sleepy for his sketching needs. When he saw "the great quantity of bones" being dug up in the cemetery around the Tour St Jacques to clear the area for redevelopment, he remarks, "How our minds love scenes of this kind, we never have enough of them." In Normandy, when he saw a man beating a dying horse, he berated him; the next day, seeing the horse again, he observes, "It was then standing, with flies covering its scars and eyes, sucking what little blood remained in it. I resolutely sat down in the

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middle of the road, and made several drawings." Delacroix was never sentimental.

He gained enormous worldly success; public commissions abounded, in spite of the criticism his frenzied and vibrantly coloured compositions inspired in the classicists. The State bought *The Massacre of Scio* for the Louvre in 1824, and Delacroix was asked to paint in the Palais Bourbon, the libraries of the Senate and the Chamber, the Apollo gallery at the Louvre and a side chapel at Saint Sulpice. It's always been thought—and Hubert Wellington repeats it—that Delacroix was Talleyrand's son, and that the old political craftsman made sure Eugène prospered. Whatever the reason, Delacroix brought an astonishingly robust and unconfined imagination to the practice of official art, at a time when the divorce of serious, innovatory work from the secure patronage of the state or other official bodies like the Church was developing in the manner we consider the norm in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

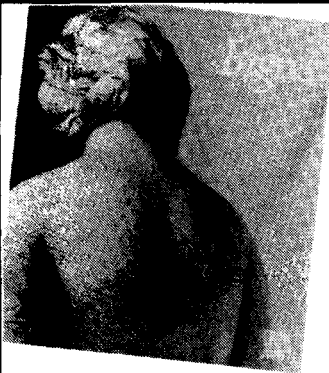
IN GERMANY, this separation helped to fuse a novel, enigmatic imagery that focused inwardly,

³ *German Romantic Painting*. By WILLIAM VAUGHAN. Yale University Press, £19.95, \$45.00.

scorning altogether history painting or edifying narrative. Just as Heinrich von Kleist, who was writing at the same time, is a modern when he traces the disruptive and violent inversion of desire and the transgressions against perception that take place in the unconscious, so painters like Philipp Otto Runge and Caspar David Friedrich use the representation of outer reality to express an inner vision, and are therefore the precursors of subjectivity as the dominant language of painting.

"Close your bodily eye", wrote Caspar David Friedrich, and he painted himself in his studio, facing a canvas on an easel turned away from us, with nothing on the walls around him, and the view out of his window closed by shutters except for a single fragment of the empty sky. Kleist was aware of Friedrich's work, and admired it uncomprehendingly, saying of the near-abstract *Monk by the Sea*, "It is as though one's eyelids had been cut away."

William Vaughan quotes Kleist's wonder in *German Romantic Painting*,³ and the imagery of eyes is apt. While Delacroix watched, but absented himself from the scenes he painted, disguising his watchfulness, using rich colour and swirling gestures to conjure emotion by proxy through his suffering figures, Friedrich watched himself watching, and so in many of his disturbing images the figures are turned away from us in silent con-



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templation of the scene before their eyes and ours. This brooding, melancholy motif of the faceless watcher, who is at one and the same time the painter and his audience, appears at its most lyrical in the portrait of Friedrich's young wife, as she gazes out at a wide and empty landscape with her arms outstretched to the dimming light in a gesture of wonder and acceptance. The same motif is at its most sombrely enigmatic in the 1898 painting *Two Men Contemplating the Moon*, in which the soft Rembrandtesque ambers and russets counteract the mysterious, disturbing image of the low-lying new moon, framed by a leafless twisted tree, with crooked dead twigs and clawing roots.

But the most remarkable aspect of Friedrich's truly marvellous art is that, while creating a new metaphysical iconography, he frequently made it serve a political purpose in the same way as David. The two men contemplating the moon seem to us at first glance exemplars of a high romanticism about nature's inscrutable and impassive alienation from man. But—as Hugh Honour elucidated in *Romanticism* (1979), his excellent discussion of the dominant themes of the century, and William Vaughan here expands—Friedrich's subjects are dressed in the *altdeutsche* floppy hat and cloak, the costume of German nationalism in the years of the Liberation struggle. The 1813 *Lost French Chasseur in the Forest* works as an almost Poe-like

conjunction of awesomeness; but the lowering, shaggy, snow-laden conifers, the single ominous crow on the stump of a tree, the wandering figure at the centre of the painting lose some enigmatic magic when Vaughan reveals that the soldier stands for Napoleonic France and the forest for Prussia's eventual victory.

PHILIPP OTTO RUNGE, who died, mad, in 1880 at the age of 33, developed a subject-matter even more radically personal. His most ambitious work, *The Times of Day*, survives only in fragments. A Protestant with pronounced mystical tastes, Runge was influenced by Novalis, and by Kosegarten the Christian pantheist, and his four-part allegory represents the journey of a soul towards plenitude. The new-born infant lying in a spring meadow at the fulcrum of *Morning* is a symbol of the newly awakened soul, but also of Runge's own longing for inner purity. *The Times of Day* is spooky, for Runge's intensely detailed, rapt realism tips over into surrealism. His exactly drawn flowers and idealised *putti* look as if they are made of some eerie light-absorbent material, opalescent and unearthly like a Lalique glass.

Runge complained that people did not understand his work, "because they refused to look at them as children would." Like many theorists about the perfections of childhood (Wordsworth, Schiller, Rousseau), Runge's thought was complex, neo-Platonist in origin, and impenetrable to anything approaching an uneducated eye. Nor was he an unconscious practitioner. Vaughan tells us that "his exciting insights are communicated in the enthusiastic speculations of his notes and letters more readily than in the pictures themselves", and it is a pity he does not quote him more fully. But the book is an exciting introduction to an unjustly neglected field, and the colour plates are handsome.

Vaughan ends with the wood engravings of Alfred Rethel, *Another Dance of Death*, a variation on medieval *danses macabres* and Holbein's own sequence. The French remained in general ignorant of the work of their German contemporaries, but Rethel's remorseless satire on the upheavals of 1848 drew high praise from Baudelaire who saw the works at the Paris Exhibition of 1855. Baudelaire singles out this "*poème réactionnaire*" because "What I find truly original . . . is that it was produced at a moment when almost the whole of European humanity had gone overboard in good faith for the follies of the revolution." He thus articulates the position of the artist as adversary of the common herd. Rethel's inspiration set him aside from a popular cause, and that, in Baudelaire's eyes, was admirable in itself. The schism between high serious art and mass preoccupations became a commonplace of aesthetic theory.

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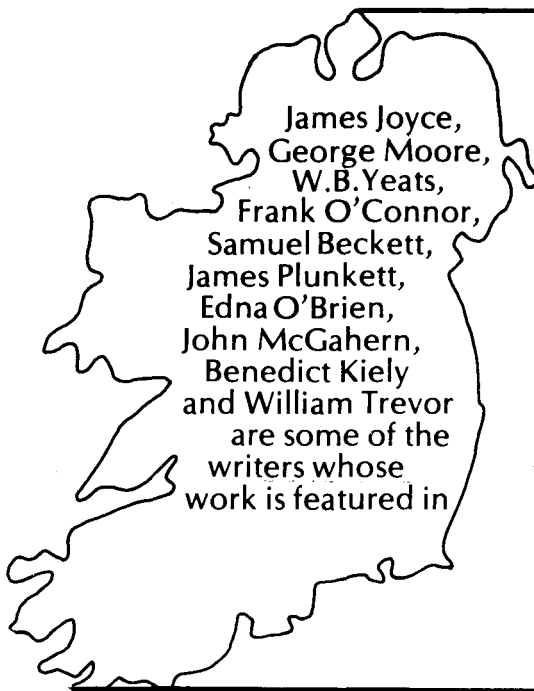
IN HIS ALTOGETHER DAZZLING history of *France 1848–1945*, Theodore Zeldin has pointed out that the view of French art as a clash between the Academy and the Impressionists is a simplification carried out by the ever-increasing number of critics and journalists who, searching to describe the equally proliferating number of painters, made up new definitions and new oppositions. The academician Thomas Couture, who was responsible for excluding many innovatory painters from the Salon, and was traditionally despised by Manet, his pupil, in fact enjoined his students to “produce with a fresh mind and a hearty spirit whatever you feel like doing”, and himself broke with the Academy’s injunction to copy from the antique.

But the passion for self-definition was not confined to the new art critics. The artists themselves indulged it, as the letters of Camille Pissarro to his son Lucien⁴ make clear. The concept of the artist as a solitary opponent of the vulgar made the quest for ever narrower descriptive terms necessary, and Pissarro, as one of the leading theorists of Impressionism, was quick to use labels invented by critics. His *Letters* also reveal a startling degree of hard feeling among the Impressionists and the

painters they influenced. When Pissarro included Seurat and Signac and other “neo-Impressionists” in the exhibition of 1886, Monet and Renoir and Sisley and Caillebotte withdrew their paintings. To be in opposition was to have identity, and Pissarro, though he was an amiable, patient, long-suffering and magnanimous father figure to the movement (he grew his long sage-like beard when he was only in his forties), had a taste for controversy. He saw himself as having the temperament of a peasant, “melancholy, harsh, savage”, and his choice of “striking motifs” in everyday scenes of peasant life, commonplace landscapes, and later in Paris and in Rouen’s new and busy streets, was abrasively revolutionary. So was his adoption of the scientific analysis of colour by Chevreul, which led to his 1880s “dot” paintings, and the quarrel with the old men of “true” Impressionism. “The pretty”, he declared in 1891, “is a greater pitfall than the ugly or the grotesque.”

He broke with Seurat, finding his forms too static, and abandoned one difficult theory of colour for another. But the sectarian results of his explorations never turned him into a rigid dogmatist, and his letters sometimes vindicate Zeldin’s revision of the interconnectedness of painting at the time. In one letter to Lucien of 1883, the apostle of open-air spontaneity encourages his son to paint from memory: “curiously enough, the observations you paint from memory will have far more power and

⁴ *Letters to His Son Lucien*. By CAMILLE PISSARRO. Edited with the assistance of LUCIEN PISSARRO by JOHN REWALD. Routledge, £15.00; Pantheon Books.



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MICHAEL JOSEPH

be much more original than those you owe to direct contact with nature.”

THE EXCELLENT CATALOGUE to the recent Pissarro exhibition at the Hayward Gallery⁵ (truly wonderful value, as so many richly illustrated and copiously annotated catalogues are today) makes it quite clear that Pissarro frequently manipulated the image he painted, altering the scale of the buildings, moving trees, and above all designing the relationship of the figures who anchor the composition.

Pissarro, an anarchist by conviction, who read and admired Kropotkin, produced such radical paintings in his lifetime that he never won any popular approval at all. Even his dealer, Durand-Ruel, if Pissarro's constant appeals for money are well founded, treated the artist with a shabby lack of faith. Pissarro is at times a radiant painter, and always a subtle one, but his studies of the French countryside looked so different to people in his day that it is actually impossible for us to see them with their eyes, as offensively experimental, shockingly new. What emerged from the exhibition (which is now in Paris at the Grand Palais and then moves to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts) is how the decisions that Pissarro and Manet and other Impressionists made about the appearance of things have become orthodoxy, so accepted that it

is almost invisible. Pissarro's palette, with its bias to paler shades of white and its grey-greens and grey-blues, expresses the light of Northern France with such fidelity since our eyes have been trained by his that his vision has become anodyne; his anarchical rejection of any meaning beyond the visual palpitation of form and light as they combine embodies without strain the contemporary view that nature is empty of thought unless meaning is ascribed to it wilfully, as in the paintings of David and Delacroix. The Pissarran aesthetic, so unpalatable in his time, now dominates the mass vision: it is the animating vision of good lighting-cameramen on BBC2.

It's quite fitting that Pissarro's high culture should have been absorbed, and the preserve of a happy few become the unconscious domain of the many, in the same way as courtly romances of a few medieval nobles became the staple of the mass-market *Bibliothèque Bleue* in the 18th century. But the process has drawn the teeth of that harsh, melancholy, savage painter. His art has made its case so completely that we can no longer see it or feel it being made. The loss has dissipated the sustaining tension that still holds in the work of David and Delacroix and Friedrich, it has abolished the contest between the canvas and its viewer, for his paintings no longer reach out to us to exact our consent, our “tears.” The “philosophy” about which Baudelaire complained is indeed unsuitable as the *prima facie* subject-matter of painting, but when circumstances have covered its presence so completely that no challenge issues from the painting, the quickened heartbeat that Delacroix experienced in front of Rubens becomes very feeble indeed.

⁵ Pissarro. By FRANÇOISE CACHIN, ANNE DISTEL, BARBARA STEIN SHAPIRO, CHRISTOPHER LLOYD and JOHN WALSH. JR. Arts Council of Great Britain, £5.00.

After Dinner

Arnold Wall 1869–1966

At ninety he told the press,
I suppose you are going to ask me
how I manage to live so long,
and so well.

Five years later,
facing me across his table,
having lifted the glass of red
wine to an untremulous
lip, and set it down
with a steady hand, he remarked
that he once possessed the whole
of the *Comédie Humaine*
in a Paris edition. Couldn't
remember now what became of it.

Between him and his death's
left foot the gangrene was
no secret, already in the door
and pressing hard, in a white fold freshly
dressed for dinner.

Other whitenesses

were summits, mountain faces,
alps both Southern and Swiss,
Tibet, one icy toehold
after another, still climbing now
in the thinnest air, the last
of all those ups and downs.

Having read many books, taught some,
and written a few, after dinner
announced, as it were, a decision,
I have been here long enough.

A little after that, Lawrence?
D. H. Lawrence? Terrible young man.
Ran away with my friend Weekley's wife.

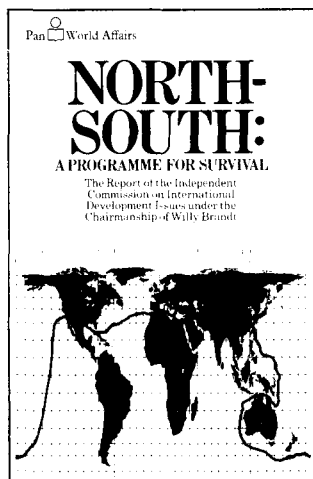
All true, as it happened. Twice
the mortifying foot, from under the table
published his pang, the grimace no sooner
read than cancelled, very civilly.

Allen Curnow

DISCUSSION

In Defence of "The Brandt Report"

A Reply—By ANTHONY SAMPSON



THE ARTICLES in the December issue of *ENCOUNTER* headed "*What's Wrong with the Brandt Report?*" seem to me to misrepresent the Report so seriously that they raise the question: What's wrong with *ENCOUNTER*? Why can't it provide a serious discussion of the world's economic

predicament, which is the subject of the Report?

As Editorial Adviser to the Brandt Commission I have no authority to speak for the commissioners; I was only one of many people involved in putting together the Report. (Mr Kenneth Minogue flatters me by suggesting that I helped the commissioners down the path of condemning arms salesmen: a Commission headed by Willy Brandt needed no such help.) But having seen the Report going through its many difficult stages, and being familiar with its arguments, I feel bound to protest against the misrepresentations and bias.

Kenneth Minogue appears so overcome by what he calls "uncontrollable irritation" that he could not even bother to count the number of commissioners on the very first page (20, not 21); and he mocks them for calling themselves "eminent persons" which they never did: the phrase referred to advisers ranging from Henry Kissinger to Barbara Ward. He claims that the Commission advocates "the creation of a Global Welfare State" of which I can find no suggestion in the Report, unless it is the reference to international taxation. And he criticises the Report for ignoring "the collapse of the North's moral involvement with the South." This is his own view: but is it shared by the young people in Britain who have been flocking to meetings about the Brandt Report?

As a "triumph of fantasy" Mr Minogue singles out one phrase: "the report tells us that branches of a reformed World Bank 'should be adequately funded and should achieve a uniformly high standard of management'." But this phrase was used not about a reformed World Bank at all but about the regional and sub-regional banks, like the African Development Bank, which are quite clearly in need of a higher standard of management. Of course by misquoting this passage Mr Minogue makes it seem meaningless.

WILLIAM LETWIN concentrates on the problem of overpopulation "which the Report, while occasionally mentioning, consistently underrates." In fact the Report's chapter on population continually stresses the problem, including the statement: "whether the nightmarish vision of a hopelessly overcrowded planet in the next century can be averted depends gravely on what is done now to hasten the stabilisation of population."

Professor Letwin goes on to complain about the "ridiculously simple-minded view" that "if we assiduously spread the word and the pill among them they will have fewer children. . . ." Yet the Report specifically warns against this simplification when discussing family planning services. He also complains that success "in the Commission's vocabulary means industrialise, modernise, or (roughly) become approximately like us. . . ." But in his opening chapter Willy Brandt insists that "we must not surrender to the idea that the whole world should copy the models of highly industrialised countries."

PROFESSOR P. D. HENDERSON has obviously analysed the Report more carefully: in the earlier version of his critique he at least concedes that it was a remarkable achievement in unanimity, without the customary omissions and evasions. But in this *Encounter*ised version he is much harsher and less fair.

The post-War economic growth of the developing world, he says, has been "one of the most striking

ing developments in recorded economic history" and complains "the only references to it in the Brandt Report, however, are perfunctory and misleading." Yet the Report begins its section on the newly industrialising countries by saying "it would be highly misleading to present the Third World as an unchanging picture of widespread poverty", and goes on that "in a number of developing countries, moreover, there have been truly remarkable advances." And the first chapter explains that in the post-War decades, "the industrialised world experienced economic growth and an expansion of trade without parallel in history, which contributed to growth in some parts of the Third World."

Professor Henderson says that the Report is "convinced that the key to greater equality, prosperity and stability in the modern world lies to hand" in the establishment of "a new international economic order..." Yet the chapter on "The Task of the South" is full of warnings about any such simple solution being to hand. It insists that "no examination of international development issues can be realistic without a full appreciation of the central tasks which developing countries must themselves undertake in pursuit of real development."

Professor Henderson quite rightly points to the critical question of whether the large-scale transfer of resources to the South could stimulate growth in

both the South and the North without unleashing further inflation. But how can he say that the Report's answer to this question undermines its case for using aid for world expansion? "For most countries", says the Report unambiguously (p. 68), "balanced trade expansion is a less inflationary form of raising the level of economic activity than stimulation through increases in domestic public expenditure." The Report insists that the fear of inflation resulting from such expansion is overstated, and that the growth in developing countries has helped to hold back inflation. And it quotes the Managing Director of the IMF who said in 1979 that aid "could result in increased global demand and thus contribute to the reactivation of world trade in a recovery of world production" (p. 241). Of course the whole question of the inflationary consequences of a massive transfer has been much debated, and is of central importance. But Professor Henderson does not do justice to the Report's argument.

ELIE KEDOURIE, who is the most dismissive of all, complains that the commissioners among many other faults are absurdly indignant against the merchants of death. "Doesn't the Brandt Commission", he asks, "recognise that if there were no buyers there would be no sellers?" Yes, it does. The governments of developing countries, it explains very clearly on page 121, "must share responsibility for restraint. Some of them have increased their military expenditure at a rate that bears little relation to their security needs at the expense of peaceful development."

THE CRITICS all imply that the Brandt Report favours government action against free enterprise or, in the extreme version of Professor Kedourie, that the report is infused with "pseudo-Marxism." All give this impression by omitting the critical areas of the Report, which occupied much of the commissioners' discussion, concerning the basic problems of development finance, debt, and the international monetary system: none of them even mentions the initials IMF.

In fact the Report acknowledges the critical role of the Western commercial banks in lending, and points out that two-thirds of the flows to the Third World are now commercial, while sharing the concern of most bankers that the big banks "can no longer be counted on to conduct the recycling process unassisted." And it is anxious to increase the role of private capital by the expansion of bond markets, by the issuing of "participation bonds" and by lifting American restrictions on foreign investments (p. 247).

The contributors seem to assume that the Report

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is hostile to multinational corporations; yet Chapter 12 stresses that “many of them have played a large role in bringing technology and capital to developing countries” (p. 187) and that “both developing and industrialised countries have obtained benefits from the management and the worldwide technology of these corporations. . . .” The basic theme of the chapter is the need to increase trust and to provide fair contracts to enable the corporations and the developing countries to cooperate more fully (p. 193).

ALL FOUR CONTRIBUTORS appear to approach the Report with the same assumptions: that it is biased against free enterprise, soft on the Soviets, and pro-OPEC; and they seem to assume that the more conservative members were simply fooled by the Marxists from the Third World. Is it clear that Katharine Graham or Edward Heath, asks Professor Kedourie, “know to what strange and barbarous propositions they are committing themselves?” Having seen something of the scrutiny and word-by-word arguments, I can assure him that it was perfectly clear. Of course it was a negotiated document, with an element of bargaining and compromise on all sides: that was the whole point of it. Only by omitting key sections, including those which deal with commercial banking and private investment, can the conservatives be made to appear dupes of the Left.

Three of the contributors seem to assume that the whole idea of the Commission was absurd. Professor Kedourie makes fun of the very notion of looking forward twenty years and predicting overpopulation or scarcity of oil. “How much less speculative—and how much more accurate”, he writes, “to have pointed out that there is today absolutely no shortage of oil, and that, traded in a free market, this commodity would not fetch a tenth of its current price.” If he really believes this, could he not explain it further?

Luckily the bias of these contributors is not shared by many bankers and industrialists who believe that there is an urgent need to adapt institutions and to improve relations with the Third World if their own future stability is to be assured. Already at last year’s meeting of the IMF in October some of the Report’s recommendations—including the doubling of the World Bank’s lending ratio and the relaxation of the IMF’s conditions of lending—were being acted on. Which makes it odd that Professor Henderson should insist that “the Report does not deserve to be taken seriously”—a much more drastic condemnation than his previous critique which conceded that “there is much to be said for many of the specific recommendations.” How can he square these two judgments?

It is clear that even without the support of these critics, the discussions on the Brandt Report will be

continued at the North-South Summit in Mexico in June. But I find it distressing that they should not only give such a partial and bad-tempered version of its recommendations, but offer no positive suggestions about alternative programmes.

P. D. Henderson

MR SAMPSON thinks that I was unfair to the Brandt Report in three respects, two specific and one general. The specific points concern (1) economic growth in the developing countries over the past 30 years, and (2) the possible connection between larger aid transfers and greater world prosperity.

(1) As to the growth of output, the passage from the Brandt Report which Mr Sampson cites in its defence is precisely one which I have quoted elsewhere as misleading. The Report does indeed say that in the period after World War II “the industrialised world experienced economic growth and an expansion of trade without parallel in history, which contributed to growth in some parts of the Third World.” I believe, however, that this form of words fails to do justice to the facts. Even more than in the industrialised countries, it is the growth of output *in the developing world* which has been “without parallel in history”—and not just in “some parts” but in the great majority of developing countries. The Brandt Report failed to present the evidence on this in a balanced way (and incidentally does not refer to the relevant statistical data), because of its mistaken conviction that the economic prospects of developing countries are to a large extent determined by what it described as “the fundamental inequality of economic strength” between North and South.

(2) The second issue is a complex one, and my complaint about the Report is that it is neither clear nor consistent. On the one hand, it suggests that larger aid flows would “stimulate exports from the North and thus help to revive the flagging world economy.” On the other hand, as Mr Sampson correctly notes, it argues that the industrial countries would experience not just an increase in exports but a “balanced trade expansion.” It is not, however, explained how this balanced trade expansion is to come about, nor how it is to lead to faster growth and lower unemployment. The Report’s consideration of these questions is just not adequate.

As to the general aspect, Mr Sampson considers that in the ENCOUNTER article I was “harsher and less fair” to the Report than in my earlier and much

longer review in *The World Economy*. It is true that what I said was negative, but this was because I had been asked to give my own answer to the perfectly fair question, "What's wrong with the Brandt Report?" I certainly think that there are points to be made in favour of the Report, and I tried to indicate some of these in my earlier review. It is also the case, however, that my ENCOUNTER article dealt only with what seem to me the *main* flaws in the Report. It made no reference to what I regard as additional though less serious weaknesses, such as the one-sided analysis of protectionism, the sadly inadequate treatment of the problems of international agencies, and the failure to consider the possible relation between the volume of aid transfers and the conduct of recipient governments.

LIKE MR SAMPSON, I believe that the issues which the Brandt Report is concerned with are serious, and that the governments of the rich countries are at present handling them none too well. Unlike him, however, I think that the Report itself is thoroughly misleading in its view of the international system, and of economic relationships and choices.

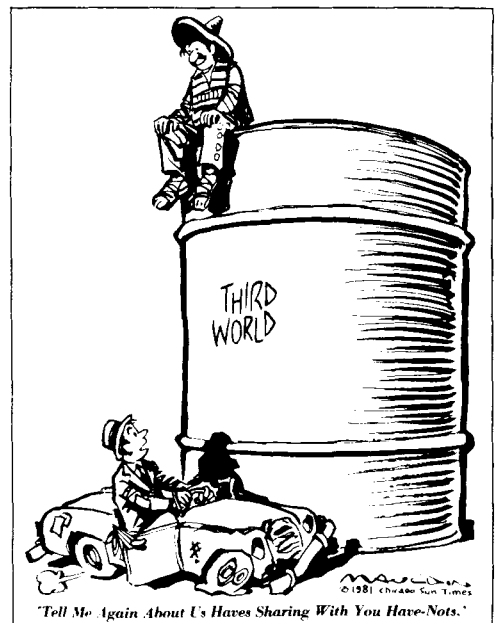
Kenneth Minogue

THE BRANDT REPORT floats in never-never land. Its commissioners—O.K., 21, not 20—are neither academics, probing the truth, nor politicians, who must face responsibility for what goes wrong. Rather, they are the great and the good making paper-plans about other people's resources; and their claim on our attention lies, ultimately, in their admirable high-mindedness. This is why all Mr Sampson's skill can only produce a little peripheral nibbling at the serious issues which he purports to be dealing. It is, presumably, no more than a verbal point that the Report does not use such an *expression* as that of a "global Welfare state", since this idea seemed to me then, as it does now, to capture the essence of what it is all about. And to invoke this expression usefully raises such questions as: do we really have the same responsibilities to the poor all over the world as we have to the poor at home? Do welfare state policies (i.e. redistribution in order to equalise) actually promote harmony between the givers and the receivers? Do such policies increase the self-reliance of those they are designed to help? No doubt the answers to these questions are difficult and highly contestable; and the contestability is precisely the point the Report seeks to evade by its

invocation of a terrible crisis unless we follow its recommendations.

I DON'T REALLY THINK that my point about the collapse of the North's moral involvement with the South is refuted by the fact that some people come to meetings in *Britain* to discuss the Brandt Report. Nor does it matter a jot that, in dealing with a notably elliptical passage proposing better banks, I failed to realise that the Report had moved from the World Bank to "regional banks." My point was with the predicate, not the subject, of the sentence; and that point emphasised the way in which the very grammar of the sentence obliterated the gap between intention and achievement, a manner of talking characteristic of the Report, and adding up to the view that all that is necessary is that *we* focus our wills and we shall succeed in bringing about this very desirable objective.

As evidence of the Report's distance from reality, I cited its continuous preoccupation with Arms spending. In his reply, Mr Sampson remains convinced that some Third World countries "have increased their military expenditure at a rate that bears little relation to their security needs..." Who is to be the judge of such needs? Certainly not a set of Commissioners who will never have to take the responsibility if they get it wrong. The Shah of Iran used to be the characteristic butt of such judgments. His successors have found a use for the hardware he acquired.



William Letwin

MY COMMENT ON the Brandt Report pointed out a single vital flaw: that by attributing the poverty of the "poorest countries" to Nature rather than Man, to paucity of resources rather than a persistent tendency to overpopulation in those countries, the Report exaggerates the likelihood that foreign aid can substantially improve their situation. I maintained that unless the deep and complex causes of overpopulation in those countries change substantially, foreign aid would lower the standard of living in donor countries without raising it in those recipient countries; would only swell the number of impoverished people in the poorest countries; and would, thus, be wasteful at best and destructive at worst.

Mr Sampson has offered three points in rebuttal.

(1) Against my contention that the Commission virtually ignored overpopulation as a cause of poverty in the poorest countries, he points to an entire chapter of the Report that warns against the nightmare of overpopulation. (2) Against my assertion that it is simple-minded to hope that population in the poorest countries can be restrained merely by spreading information about birth control, he answers that the Commission never said otherwise. (3) Against my allegation that the Commission construes "successful development" as consisting of modernisation, industrialisation and

becoming roughly like us, he quotes Willy Brandt himself as warning against this very idea.

The third of Mr Sampson's points has no bearing on the argument I advanced. Had I misrepresented the Commission's criteria of successful development, that would not have weakened or strengthened my case for questioning the efficacy of foreign aid to the poorest countries.

But I did not misrepresent the Commission's views. Although it is true that Willy Brandt rejects "the idea that the whole world should copy the models of highly industrialised countries" (an idea which he capriciously labels as "'cultural' imperialism"), the body of the Report repeatedly treats Modernisation and Industrialisation as essential parts of "Development." For instance: development includes "passage . . . from a traditional rural economy to a sophisticated urban one" (p. 49); one of the chief economic causes of poverty is that the poor nations put too much effort into agriculture and rely too much on exporting raw materials (p. 51); the most successful countries in the South are those that have industrialised (p. 53); and the "only way" that the poorer countries can meet their fundamental needs for food, health, housing and education is for the industrialised nations "to help the economies of these countries to grow and industrialise" (p. 58).

In short, even while Willy Brandt holds that other countries should not aim to imitate us

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exactly, the Commission insists that their salvation depends on their coming to resemble us more than they do now. I do not believe that this recipe is the only correct one, but the Commission appears to believe in it.

DESPITE Mr Sampson's second defence—that the Report “specifically warns” against oversimplification when discussing birth control—the relevant section of the Report opens with a resounding declaration that underdeveloped countries “who have pursued [family-planning] programmes vigorously have registered considerable success” (p. 107). Afterwards, indeed, follow various qualifications. On my reading, despite reservations—and qualms, doubts, distinctions, and caveats—the Commission's fundamental view is that people in the poorest countries do wish to keep births down to a level that would stabilise their population and only lack the knowledge of how to do it. I deny that the wish is there.

Mr Sampson's first objection, the only one that substantially meets my argument, is as nugatory as his other two. The Report does indeed point to a danger of over-population. At least, Willy Brandt says that by 2000 A.D. “the world may become overpopulated” (p. 11) and the Commission says that the expected increase in world population is likely to put severe “global pressure on the resources and the natural environment of the earth” (p. 108). These familiar worries about the future may be justified; though huge population increases in the developed world during the past two centuries have been accompanied by rapidly rising per capita incomes, it is always conceivable that the world's population may become too large to be sustained. Yet be this as it may, it is in no way germane to the thesis I had put forward: that the poverty, *at this moment*, of people in the poorest countries is caused by persistent overpopulation there, and will therefore not be remedied merely by the “action programme” of foreign aid which the Commission proposes for those countries (p. 89), a programme which would tend, if successful, rapidly to increase the population of the poorest countries.

MR SAMPSON'S OBJECTIONS, therefore, totally miss the target. The reason he was able to find one quotation or another with which to attempt a confutation is that the Report luxuriates in underbrush, in fine print which takes back what is given and qualifies what is asserted. Nevertheless, the main doctrines stand out clearly enough—and among them stands the doctrine that none-of-us-will-survive-unless-the-North-gives-vastly-more-aid-to-the-South. That is the doctrine which I questioned, and which Mr Sampson's reply has done nothing to reinforce.

Elie Kedourie

I AM gratified, as I am sure your readers will be, by Mr Sampson's assurance that it was clear that Katharine Graham and Edward Heath knew to what strange and barbarous propositions they were committing themselves. Readers will also be—as I myself was—shocked by Mr Sampson's revelation that the Brandt Report was a “negotiated document, with an element of bargaining and compromise on all sides.” Mr Sampson's language here discloses that the doom-laden prophecy, which we took to be the inspired and agonised utterance of the truth, is in reality careful and politic calculation, circumspect bargaining, cautious compromise. We are disappointed, and puzzled.

Bargaining about what? We would have been even more greatly in Mr Sampson's debt had he lifted the curtain a little bit, and revealed which issue was traded by which Commissioner against which, and who won and who lost. As it is, we have to be content with the bare text, and cannot penetrate behind the public *persona* with its carefully composed expression. The text unmistakably shows that if bargaining there was, the winner is not in doubt. The very framework of the Report, beginning with its Manichean division between North and South, its assumptions, its attitudes are all collectivist, *dirigiste*, and Marxist—albeit that the Marxism is, as I wrote in my article, heretical. Mr Sampson, therefore, does not seem justified in complaining that the Report has been misrepresented, that its praise of commercial banking and private investment has been ignored, etc. Given the starting-point and the conclusions of the Report, Mr Sampson's objection is like that of someone who protests that whereas he had really said that a woman was only a little bit pregnant, he is now calumniated as having said that she was totally pregnant. Commercial banking and private investment will be at best aliens on sufferance in the world envisaged by the Brandt Report, with its massive gratuitous and automatic transfers, its “concessional” finance, and its commodity agreements.

MR SAMPSON TAKES me to task for what I wrote about the attitude of the Report to the “merchants of death.” He refers me to p. 121 of the Report where the Commissioners enjoin the “governments of developing countries” to share “responsibility for restraint”, in order to make the point that contrary to what I had written, the Commissioners were even-handed as between the merchants of death and their customers. The injunction to the governments of developing countries to share “responsibility for restraint” is itself put with sympathetic restraint. The Commissioners'

delicacy becomes even more admirable in the passage which immediately follows, and which speedily retracts the mild strictures implicit in the appeal for restraint. "But we recognize", the Commissioners proceed to declare on p. 122, "the difficulties of restraining arms procurement in areas of tension where large imbalances of military capacity exist..." "Especially", they hasten indulgently to add, "where this is combined with persistent oppression such as apartheid." But who is to sit in judgment, to recognise imbalances, certify persistent oppression, and wash away the sin of trafficking with the merchants of death? The Brandt Commissioners? This passage, which some might call sanctimonious, is perhaps one of the products of the "bargaining." The merchants of death themselves do not seem to benefit from such gentleness.

"Business has been rewarding for both old and new arms suppliers who have spread an incredible destructive capability over the globe" (p. 14).

"The motives of power, influence and commerce—and, absurdly, prestige—that lie behind the arms trade must be harnessed to development, which would be a source of legitimate pride" (p. 15).

"With the recession of the arms industry in the early 1970s—following the end of the Vietnam war—and the emergence of new profitable markets, particularly in the Middle East, the drive to sell weapons to the Third World was intensified, often aimed at stimulating new demand irrespective of real defence needs. These military-industrial pressures in the North are

often reinforced and connected with contacts in the developing countries..." (pp. 120–1).

Contacts? is it meant that the merchants need native middlemen, compradores? In contrast with this gingerliness, the Report begins Chapter 7 (on disarmament and development) with the simple and blunt question "Arms or Peace?" One wonders, however, which is the more delusive, the self-assured judgment that arms are bad and "Development" good, or this even more emphatic, categorical, and rather demagogic affirmation that it is either Arms or Peace. Is the alternative proposition, Arms therefore Peace, so utterly beneath contempt, so irrelevant to world-political realities? What is supposed to defend what is worth defending—rhetorical resolutions in the UN? Editorials in *The Observer*?

Mr Sampson also seems surprised by my saying that there is no dearth of oil, and that in a free market this commodity would not fetch a tenth of its current price. Mr Sampson must, however, know that the enormous increases in the price of oil since 1973 were not the outcome of market forces, but were—and continue to be—dictated by a cartel operated by governments. If the present price and supply of oil were the outcome of the forces of supply and demand, there would have been no need for the cartel. This much is clear: and so I consider the argument about the presumed shortage of oil twenty years hence the merest apologia for OPEC, which the Report had no business to endorse. Does Mr Sampson know of any other commodity, however essential, the current price of which is governed by what might or might not happen to its supply twenty years hence?

LANGUAGE

The Mediums are the Message

Wm. Safire & Verbal Vigilantism—By D. J. ENRIGHT

ABCDEFGHIJ A SEASONED WARRIOR some of whose sorties have been reported in these columns, William Safire fires his opening salvo on the half-title verso of this new book.¹ The page in question is headed “*Also by William Safire*”, and William Safire footnotes for our benefit that this does not refer to a book called *Also*, by William Safire.

“The line, which appears unchallenged in thousands of books, should read ‘Other books written by the same author’.”

But that could be a misrepresentation, in that some authors go on writing much the same book, not truly to be described as “other”, under different titles. Better, perhaps, is “By the same author”, even though authors can change in the course of their lifetime, and though the phrase may suggest that the person who prepared the prelim copy had forgotten the author’s name.

But never mind. Worse things happen in books, as early on or even earlier. The jacket of a book recounting a British soldier’s adventures in wartime Holland carried a picture of a badge inscribed “S.H.” The blurb stated that these letters stood for “*slecht hoerend*” (translated as “hard of hearing”), the point being that the fugitive wore the badge to cover up his ignorance of Dutch. Soon after publication a shocked Dutch reader wrote to the publisher, explaining that “S.H.” stood for “*slecht horend*”, and that “*slecht hoerend*” meant “Bad Whoring.” A sort of Scarlet Letter or Scarlett O’Hara?

In any case, can the present book properly be said to be written by William Safire, seeing that a good third of it consists of excerpts from readers’ letters to him? Not that anyone is going to complain, for *On Language* would be the poorer without the sense of community and “on-going” linguistic life gained through this collaboration. As

Safire himself is the first to admit in the last line of the book. Talking about words owes its fascination to the fact that, in a uniquely immediate way, it is talk about life. And we do not live alone, we do not talk to ourselves. (Well, not all the time.) As for the exasperations accompanying the fascination—as one correspondent here says, resignedly: “*C’est la langue.*”

“Because I both write to live and live to write”, Safire declares in his preface, “I have taken an interest in the implements of my craft.” He stops short, thinking perhaps of all those readers poised to pounce, and asks himself why he didn’t use the shorter word “tools.” Because it would have drawn him into the cliché, “tools of my trade.” But it is better to use a handy cliché than to be seen straining to avoid it. So he amends to “tools of my trade”, more honouring himself in the observance than in the breach.

This nervousness is a malady most incident to the language “purist.” “*We Never Make Mistakes.*” As he well knows, people are all agog to hoist him with his own petard. As a *memento mori*, Safire keeps by him. . . . Start again. Safire keeps by him, as a sort of *memento mori*, a list of “fumblerules”, said to have been culled from teachers of English (not, or not all, I hope, from “English teachers”, Mr Safire!). Among them: “*Remember to never split an infinitive*”—“*Reserve the apostrophe for it’s proper use and omit it when its not needed*”—“*Never, ever use repetitive redundancies*”—and “*Last but not least, avoid clichés like the plague; seek viable alternatives.*”

Elsewhere Safire confesses, or is made by his assiduous audience to confess, to errors of his own: “a firm hand on the rudder of the Ship of State” (a mixed-metaphorical cliché); the repetitive redundancy of “a hollow tunnel” and also of “the cynosure of all eyes.” I am not convinced that this last is mortally tautologous. A musician could be the cynosure of all ears; and the word = “dog’s tail”, something one would have thought to be of compelling interest only to other dogs’ noses. At all events, do unto others . . . and Safire ought not to have objected to the saying “*the smile on your*

¹ *On Language*. By WILLIAM SAFIRE. Times Books (New York), \$12.95.

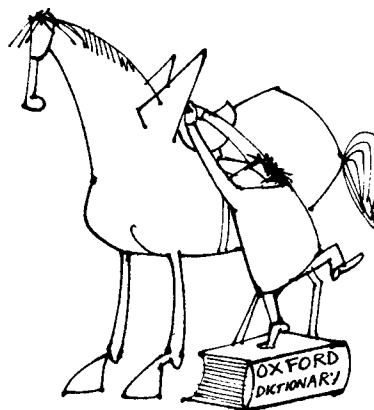
face" in that it couldn't be anywhere else. A lady reminds him of the smile in Irish eyes; and I remind him of Browning's "good gigantic smile o' the brown old earth" and Shelley's "Heaven's blue smile." Not that Safire is customarily illiberal in such matters. (He not only allows, he espouses "hopefully", on the grounds that "hopably"—cf. "regrettably"—doesn't exist. And gets trounced for his misplaced pains.) "An idiom", he writes, "is language's way of telling logic: 'Sorry, Charley, that's the way life is in the 80s'."

THE TROUBLE IS, one man's idiom is another's illiteracy. Like Jacques Barzun and like John Simon (Safire's rather harder-hitting counterpart on *Esquire*, whose book *Paradigms Lost* will be published in Britain later this year), Safire is unrelentingly opposed to the locution "I cannot help but": a slovenly confusion of two different idioms, "I cannot but" and "I cannot help", it is itself "confusing, redundant and sloppy." Yet the first of these "authentic" idioms is impossibly archaic or poetical, while the second sounds slightly petulant or frivolous—unfit for the more anguished circumstances in which we may need some such expression. "I cannot help but" bears a hint of pathos, a sense of resisting unsuccessfully, of being forced. Compare: "I can't but love you", "I can't help loving you", and "I can't help but love you." Which, if you had to, would you use? I cannot help but think that Safire and his potent cohorts are barking up the wrong tree here.

Most of the time, however, Safire's eye is sharp, and so is his ear. Telling us that the *New York Times* has dropped the term "investigative reporter" since all reporters are supposed to investigate something or other, he cites a piece of nomenclature that has mystified many of us: "Distinguished Professor." You don't mean there are undistinguished ones? Then there is that common absurdity, "literally" used to mean its opposite, "metaphorically", as in sports commentaries: "the crowd has gone literally mad. . . ." (But you have to be less than sane, to attend a football match in person.) One of Safire's "Lexicographic Irregulars" proposes, with doubtfully appropriate subtlety, that the confusion arises out of the association of "literally" with "literary", a word which in turn suggests metaphors, hyperboles, and other poetically licentious language. When asked whether sloppiness in speech was caused by ignorance or by apathy, an English teacher (teacher of English?) replied: "I don't know and I don't care."

SAFIRE'S RELATIONS with his "Irregulars" are highly interesting, and help to generate much of the comedy in this almost continuously entertaining

Bon Mot



London

SHOULD a Frenchman complain to you in French, that his brassière is digging into his shoulders, do not rush off in alarm to report him to the nearest gendarme; he is merely letting you know that the straps of his rucksack are too tight.

Such linguistic landmines are carefully mapped in the new edition of the Concise Oxford French Dictionary published this week, the first major revision since the dictionary first appeared in 1934. The updated version is undoubtedly more correct than the original, but it is much less fun. No longer are French colloquialisms rendered into English by such phrases as "By jingo!" or "deuced annoying". Gone are such translations as swell, toff, rotter, bounder, old bean, silly duffer, and silly jugginses who were off their chump because they were dippy about a girl.

The verb *dégrafer*, which in 1934 meant "to open one's bodice", becomes in 1980 simply "to undo". *Heurter* which in the first edition meant rather dubiously "to bang each other" has become "to collide". *Rencontre*, which formerly listed among examples of its use "Great wits jump together" has become "Great minds think alike".

SOME WORDS have become total losses. The editors of the new edition felt they had to discard *ploquer*, which in 1934 meant "to sheathe a ship's bottom with hair". Bottom-sheathing has pretty well died out, even in France.

Translation has of course become easier over the years, as more and more "franglais" words penetrate the defences of the Académie Française. The dictionary lists dozens, including "le blue-jean", le businessman, le média, "le globetrotter", the verb "knockouter" (as applied to boxing), and even examples where a perfectly good French word already exists. There is nothing wrong with "l'aiglefin", to describe a fish, but more and more Frenchmen are referring to le haddock.

ONE FINAL WARNING. If a Frenchman complains that the straps of his soutien-gorge are too tight, call a gendarme at once; the fellow is wearing women's clothing.

THE TIMES (London)

book. They can be very sharp with him; he is generally tolerant towards them, even allowing one of them to misspell his name unchecked. Discussing the common confounding of "flout" with "flaunt", he quotes President Carter's statement (as reported by the *New York Times*) that the Government of Iran needs to realise that "it cannot flaunt, with impugny, the expressed will and law of the world community." (Apparently "impugny" was a mistranscription.) An Irregular thereupon informs Safire that according to the *Third Merriam-Webster Unabridged Dictionary* and also the *Unabridged Random House Dictionary* "to treat contemptuously: to flout" is one of the meanings of "flaunt", and so he can only conclude that, in rejecting "accepted American usage", Safire had "let political partisanship colour his amateur linguistics." Definition of "political": epithet to clobber opponent with when all else fails.

Safire makes no reply: he loves his children, even when they answer back rudely. But if the use of "flaunt" to mean "flout" is "accepted usage", then it didn't ought to be. And the same goes for *Webster's Third New International Dictionary's* definition of "*Hobson's choice*":

"The necessity of accepting one of two or more equally objectionable things."

If dictionaries are going to flaunt misusages as

accepted usages, we shall have to flout them. Or at the very least—is that what *Unabridged* means?—abridge them. "So much for the use of native informants", as another Irregular remarks: he had asked his teenage son, "What's a metaphor?" and was told, "To graze cows in."

THE LEXICOGRAPHIC IRREGULARS are a colourful band. When the Commandant devotes a column to the art of euphemism—"pre-owned Cadillacs" and "experienced cars"; "sophisticated" instead of "sweetened" apple juice; "household technicians" for domestic servants; "impact attenuators" for bumpers—one of them chimes in with "evading the issue" for birth control, and with that most ingenious and ancient evasion, "life insurance." Still on this subject, another reports, apropos of "airline-ese", that since "fire extinguisher" implies fire, early planes were fitted with green (not red) cylinders bearing the inscription "Smoke Eliminator." Even so, those passengers well versed in that accumulated wisdom which we call "clichés" might have whimpered to themselves: No smoke without fire.

As soon as identified, euphemisms can be distinctly alarming: "*terminate with extreme prejudice*" seems much nastier than "liquidate", "*liquidate*" seems more disagreeable than "*assassinate*", though "*assassinate*" does sound grander than "kill." I wonder whether the Swedish delegate to the United Nations Disarmament Committee was altogether right in objecting to the euphemistic language adopted by military strategists.

"This has the effect of throwing dust into people's eyes. Everybody knows what a cannon or gun is, but what is conveyed by terms such as Mini-nuke or Mirv, or Honest John or Fat Boy?" (*The Times*, 4 February 1981).

Personally I wouldn't trust anyone with names like those; technical acronyms, or "alphabet soup", are much more insidious.

Not that euphemisms are all bad: "*relieve oneself*" instead of "*urinate*" (given in *Collins English Dictionary*, 1979, as an example) is surely legitimate, and a rabbinical Irregular observes that the Talmud refers to a blind person as possessed of "extra light." Yet perhaps good euphemisms are not euphemisms at all, but something quite different, like nuances. A somewhat *recherché* anti-euphemism comes from a Californian Irregular, who passes on the expression "love in a canoe", signifying weak coffee: i.e., "fuckin' near water."

THOUGH NOT exactly in that way, Safire's own style is occasionally a little too rich for comfort. "Oldsters may find it hard to discuss the old spine of self-reliance"—it must be hard to discuss a spine

TOWARD SOCIALISM IN AMERICA

by
HAROLD FREEMAN, M.I.T.

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unless you are an orthopaedist—"or to adapt to the tieless-in-Gaza dress codes. . . ." It is axiomatic that slaves wear only loincloths; no one at the mill would wear a tie, except conceivably the overseer. Perhaps Safire has been led astray by that more recent phenomenon, the Gaza Strip? Or is he merely teasing? That he should remain "in two minds" about the word "ambivalent" is permissible. Cf. Bergen Evans:

"Confronted with a choice between *choose* and *opt*, my impulse is to *opt* for *choose*."

What is not permissible is "permissible", a lapse which draws a poetic reproach from a reader:

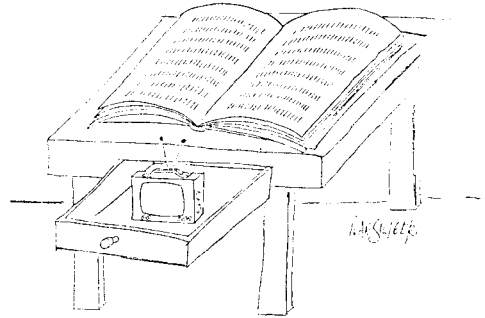
*In language Safire's a dick
In tracing abuses that stick:
Like colons and dashes—
and hyphen mish-mashes;
He writes permissible (sic)!!!*

And while technical jargon—the tools of others' trades—is always of interest, at least to the outsider who isn't constantly subjected to it, and we are amused to hear that in the world of show-biz "gorilla" = smash hit (i.e. a monster success), I remain in more than two minds about Safire's account of "gorilla" as originally "a Greek word for a race of hairy women." My dictionaries (less sexist on this point but more racist) derive it from a Greek word, 5th-6th century B.C., for an African tribe. "Let Greeks be Greeks, and Women what they are", as quoth Anne Bradstreet.

Etymologically speaking, Safire doesn't always push far and hard enough. Of that hot word "feisty", applied leech-like or doggedly to Menachem Begin among others, he notes the two dictionary definitions: (1) touchy, excitable, quarrelsome; and (2) spirited, frisky. He then repairs to the word's root for clarification: "A 'feist' is a small dog of mixed ancestry, a flatulent mongrel"—which, since mongrels may be either frisky or quarrelsome, leaves us where we were, with "a Humpty-Dumpty word, a voguish befuddler, meaning what the speaker chooses it to mean." That is well said. All the same, "flatulent" is something of a euphemism here: *Collins English Dictionary* reveals that the dialect word "feist"/"fist", small dog, is related to Old English "fisting", breaking wind. These days "feisty" may owe its uncertain force, by a process of *fausse amitié*, to the other words it brings to mind: "fist", "fizzy", "yeasty", "fighter", "fiery", as well as "frisky." In view of its roots, or the roots of its roots, we should do best not to use it at all, except in such contexts as "that feisty tyke is stinking the place out."

SAFIRE ASSURES US at intervals that the mistakes in his pieces are not deliberately planted to

Getting Familiar



THE new editor of "Bartlett's Dictionary of Familiar Quotations", Emily Morison Beck, daughter of Historian Samuel Eliot Morison, has reverted somewhat to Bartlett's original concept of familiarity, and what is familiar today is pop culture.

So step aside Shakespeare—a few inches, anyway—to make some room for Bob Dylan ("the answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind"), Janis Joplin ("Down on me, down on me/ Looks like everybody in this whole round world/ Is down on me"), Timothy Leary ("Turn on, tune in, drop out"), Wladziu Valentino Liberace ("I cried all the way to the bank"), Yogi Berra ("The game isn't over till it's over") and Woody Allen ("Play It Again, Sam").

A NEW GENERATION of literary figures also sounds pop: Mario Puzo ("I'll make him an offer he can't refuse"), Paddy Chayevsky ("I'm mad as hell and I'm not going to take it any more") and Andy Warhol ("In the future, everyone will be world-famous for 15 minutes"). Even the most eminent politicians nowadays are often remembered less for literary powers than for pop theatrics. Richard Nixon, for example, is trailed by a whole series of unstatesmanlike remarks:

"You won't have Nixon to kick around any more . . . I'm not a crook . . . I want you all to stonewall it."

In keeping with its relentless democracy, the new Bartlett's greatly increases the space devoted to the works of Anon. He (she) now provides not only such familiar items as "O.K.," "Kilroy was here" and "Women and children first," but also a cornucopia of cowboy songs, Indian chants and even some less-than-familiar Swahili proverbs ("Speak silver, reply gold").

The 15th edition, with its chorus of sayings by Neil Armstrong, Muhammad Ali, R. D. Laing, Mick Jagger and the rest of the tribe, reminds one of Victor Hugo's platitude about an idea whose time had come, a quotation that Bartlett's calmly assures us Hugo never said.

Otto Friedrich
in TIME MAGAZINE

catch his readers out or stir them up. I am not sure about his assurances. Such errors as “*redundency*” and “*diety*” (not even, he later comments, a word for a very thin god) are unlikely in a man of his cares and skills, while the appearance of those common tricksters “*transcience*” and “*gutteral*” has such educational value as hardly to seem inadvertent. “*Transcience*” may owe itself to transient memories of “science” and transcendent”; and “*gutteral*” to the assumption that people who talk like that were born in one, or (more charitably) to the sound of water running down a drain.

Similarly, his statement that “media” is the only possible plural of “medium” could have been intended to draw the Irregulars’ fire: What would you use when referring to two or more spiritualists? Yet one cannot suppose him less than totally sincere when he asserts, mistakenly and in one of his rare pedantic moments, that “the lion’s share” means “the whole thing” and *not* the greater part of the spoils. True, in Aesop’s fable the lion, claiming under various heads, gets everything. But we are concerned with an idiom, not with literary exegesis. Sorry, Bill, that’s the way life is.

I REMARKED EARLIER that it was damaging for a language purist himself ever to make a mistake. Not necessarily so. Safire admits to, and apologises for, his slips so frankly, indeed so charmingly, as to build up a store of moral capital. When he confesses that several weeks earlier he wrote “harkening back” instead of “harkening back”, some of the

harkening backs he had put up must have relaxed. (I don’t wish to seem holier than he, but shouldn’t it really be “*harking back*”?) He is then all the freer to make merry over the lapse in linguistic rectitude suffered by the chairman of the Carter-Mondale Presidential Committee when, in the course of a speech, he referred to Jimmy Carter’s “moral turpitude.”

John Simon, ever ready to take a bull by the lapel, believes that whenever you overhear somebody, even a total stranger, saying “Between you and I”, you should step in and put him right. This is the way to make linguistic martyrs—and no doubt every cause needs martyrs. William Safire is a gentler, more cajoling soul. In this matter he has sought advice from the editor of the latest edition of *The Amy Vanderbilt Complete Book of Etiquette*. “If the Mary Joneses correct the John Smiths of this world, I think it hurts”, she instructed him, attaching a sort of kinship table of propriety: “Parents correcting children; teachers correcting children; employers correcting employees; married people and lovers correcting each other to help the other person out. . . .” Between you and I, you had better strike up a fairly intimate relationship with that stranger at the very outset—or else confine yourself to tiny tots.

Be all that as it all may, I cannot agree with Melvin J. Lasky’s pessimistic view [ENCOUNTER, February-March 1981] that, while “word purism” is undeniably a pleasant pastime, “on a serious level, it is a lost cause.” On some levels, yes, but not on *serious* ones. So keep it up, Mr Safire—you’re a regular guy. And so are your Irregulars.

AUTHORS & CRITICS

A Reply to Leo Labedz

Under Ideological Eyes

By Richard Lowenthal



LEO LABEDZ and I agree on two essential things: that the power balance between the Soviet Union and the West has severely shifted to the West's disadvantage in recent years—he says since the beginning of *Détente*, I say since about the

turn of 1973–4—and that a major effort must be made by the West to restore it. We disagree radically on the reasons for the deterioration, but only very partly on what is needed to restore the balance now.

Labedz is an ideological rather than a political thinker: he explains the course of history largely by ideas, particularly wrong ideas. According to him, the balance worsened chiefly because people in the West had the wrong ideas about the Soviet Union and *Détente*, and failed to listen to the warnings given by those who thought the way he does. Accordingly, his rambling article is long on quotations (including not a few quotations from himself) but short on facts.¹

Labedz claims that the worsening of the Western situation started chiefly with the Kissinger-Nixon *Détente*. But elsewhere he mentions that it was Robert McNamara who, in the early 1960s, stopped the production of strategic nuclear rockets and thus permitted the Soviets to catch up to approximate parity in this field. And after all, it was

Henry Kissinger who made the effort at least to stabilise the relation of strategic forces at approximate parity. Labedz calls the SALT arms-control process an illusion, and at one point claims that just in this field, the “central strategic balance” has been upset. But this claim remains controversial among the experts, and I am not convinced. Moreover, Labedz’s (justified) demand that the new American administration should “increase military expenditure to frustrate the Soviet *effort to achieve strategic superiority*” suggests that he is not really convinced either. Labedz remarks correctly that winning Somalia for the West was no adequate compensation for losing Ethiopia to the Soviets. But he fails to mention that Egypt was won over from the Soviet side, and China drawn back into world politics as a balancing factor, during the early years of *Détente*. Kissinger was no more inhibited than the Soviets by the fatuous document about refraining from “unilateral advantages” which has so aroused Labedz’s indignation.

THE PRESENT DETERIORATION of the balance started in the middle 1970s not simply because of illusions about *Détente* among the American public, but because of the revulsion among that public against any use of American power in distant lands in the aftermath of Viet Nam—not an idea but a profound emotion which made millions of people temporarily incapable of making distinctions among the various circumstances in which such power was used; and because of other factors of paralysis in the American political system which I mentioned in my article in the November ENCOUNTER.² In arguing, in that article, that a rational policy of *Détente* not only requires a simultaneous effort to maintain the military balance, but that both needs can very well be explained to a democratic electorate at the same time, I mentioned the fact that the popularity of *Ostpolitik* in the Federal Republic of Germany has, by common consent of Allied experts, led to no neglect of the strength and modernisation of the *Bundeswehr*. Labedz replies with the strange statement that “during the same period, over 40% of the West Germans have become neutralist-minded . . . as recent polls indicate.” He does not say which polls, or what questions were asked. I can assure him, living in Germany as I do, that this is absolute nonsense. What is true is that his own constructive point—that “strategic” and “theatre” weapons must be “recoupled” in any future negotiations with the Soviet Union, if deterrence is to remain credible and the Alliance solid—was first raised by the West German Chancellor in 1977, even while pursuing *Ostpolitik*, and later accepted in principle first by the American administration and then by

¹ Leo Labedz, “False Dilemmas, Real Alternatives”, ENCOUNTER, December 1980.

² Richard Lowenthal, “The Shattered Balance”, ENCOUNTER, November 1980.

the Soviets. That the Soviets now ask for the inclusion of the existing American theatre weapons is plain logic—and that their negotiating position in this will be stronger than it would have been before the deployment of their SS-20s is not my fault and not Helmut Schmidt's, but the fault of three years of American hesitation in taking up the issue.

ENOUGH OF THE DISPUTE about the causes of the deterioration of the balance—let us turn to the means of restoring it.

Of course, I agree that an increase of military expenditure is needed throughout the Western Alliance—both in the United States and in Western Europe.³

I also agree that the effort should not be guided by the “numbers game”, which to me means that there is no sense in resuming a *quantitative* race in strategic nuclear missiles; inevitably and miserably, the *technological* race will have to go on. But the main new effort will have to be made on one side in the so-called “Theatre Nuclear Forces”, the “Eurostrategic” missiles of medium range, and on the other in the field of global conventional mobility.

On the need to resume negotiations for the limitation of numbers of nuclear weapons, both strategic and theatre, Labedz and I seem to be as agreed as on the need to fix them on a level restoring an effective balance. As for conventional mobility, I note with satisfaction that Labedz like myself believes in the inevitability of reintroducing the draft in the United States, difficult though this will be politically. If this is done, more funds will also be freed from the personnel account for the production of high-grade weapons, as is the case in the European countries that do have the draft. I do *not* believe that negotiations, including any form of “linkage” with SALT, can stop further Soviet expansion in the Third World unless effective Western conventional mobility in the danger areas is restored. Once it is, there may be a chance for negotiation in specific cases, but hardly for a general “code of conduct” on which I am inclined to be no less sceptical than Labedz.

³ Incidentally, my worry about a wave of “hollow chauvinism” in pre-election America was not due to opposition to draft, taxes and energy-saving by the *opponents* of a tough foreign policy—which would justify Labedz's comparison to the pacifist Oxford student resolution of 1934. The real opponents of Appeasement (whether Tories like Churchill or Labour leaders like Ernest Bevin) were guilty of no such inconsistencies. What worried me was that Reagan was at one time campaigning *both* for restoring American military “superiority”, and against the draft and for lowering taxes. But what matters is, of course, what he will do now, as President.

NOW I WANT TO TAKE UP two non-military points: one economic, one political. I agree that the neglected role of COCOM should be strengthened again, and generally that there should be more consultation among the Western powers and Japan about capital credits and technological cooperation with the Soviets. But I am also convinced that to operate an effective “linkage” between such business deals and Soviet political behaviour in the Third World will be extremely difficult—not so much because of illusions about *Détente* but because of the nature of capitalist society. On one side, the powers of our governments to control such business deals are limited in law and more limited in practice; on the other, competition of national interests—alleged or real—among Allies is particularly strong in this field, most of all in times of recession and mass unemployment.

In the circumstances, I am inclined to suggest that *some* forms of economic cooperation with the Soviets may still have a more positive aspect than causing unilateral dependence by the West, and that just in the field where Labedz appears to fear them most: Energy. Needless to say, I agree with him that the West should above all concentrate on developing alternative resources and on saving oil; but this will not end our dependence on oil from the Persian Gulf for quite some time. Meanwhile, the Soviets are also facing a threatening shortage of domestic energy unless they succeed in opening up their great undeveloped Siberian resources of oil and gas; and for that they are short of both capital and specialised technologies. If they do not succeed there, Soviet expansion towards the Persian Gulf, threatening a vital clash with Western interests, becomes more likely. If they do succeed at home, with the help of Western capital and technology, both they and we may benefit—and world peace as well. Of course, such a policy of economic cooperation can never be a *substitute* for the effective military protection of vital Western energy interests. But given the necessary effort for such protection, it may supplement it in reducing the danger of the most explosive single cause for an all-out military clash.

FINALLY, Labedz has pointed out that restoring the balance can never be a purely military task, but has a necessary political component. I cordially agree, but I find his conception of the political task too narrow. He seems merely to have an increase of propaganda to the Soviet Union and the countries of the East European bloc in mind. In fact, the political task is very much larger.

In the threatened countries of the Third World, the need is for a credible alternative to both Communist (or would-be Communist) dictatorships and various forms of rule by brute military force. The

Western powers cannot *create* those alternatives; but their policy can give them a chance, where they appear, or help to defeat them.

In the Western countries themselves, their inner cohesion at a time of sharpening conflict with the Soviets depends on the government's ability to convince their own peoples that they are doing all that is needed *both* for their military security *and* for

reducing tension as far as possible and keeping the conflict under control. Throughout Western Europe, "neutralist" and pacifist tendencies were strongest at the time of the Viet Nam War; they calmed down during the period of *Détente*. With the crisis of *Détente*, they are getting stronger again. This does not prove that Western Europe is bound to become "neutralistic" or "self-

On the Changing of Moods

Washington, D.C.



WHY was early post-war America then prepared to face up to the Soviet challenge, and do it on the whole with marked success? It is easy to argue, as some historians do, that the character of President Truman, a man who

loved to make firm and rapid decisions, and who was almost devoid of self-doubts and *arrière-pensées*, was crucial—aided by the presence in London of Clement Attlee and Ernest Bevin, men of a similar cast. But I do not think that the leaders of either country could have acted directly counter to the national mood. After all, the kind of quasi-pacifist mood which existed in both Britain and the United States in the early and mid-1930s had proved impervious to the persuasions even of such accomplished political charmers as Roosevelt and Stanley Baldwin.

There was, in fact, something mysterious about the mood which made resistance to Soviet expansion possible: mysterious both in the way it came into existence, in the late 1940s, and the way it evaporated, sometime in the second half of the 1960s. By the time Mr Nixon became president it was gone, seemingly forever, with Nixon and his factotum, Dr Kissinger, actively identified with the policy of *Détente*, now seen in retrospect to have been a costly series of errors. . . .

HOW THESE PHASES of the national will wax and wane is very obscure. I suspect that words have a lot to do with it. The term "the Iron Curtain," popularized by Churchill, and its companion, "the Cold War," which appeared slightly later (I do not know who invented it), had an enormous impact on public opinion, and helped, with their vivid imagery, to persuade people to face up to what was not only a completely new but a highly unwelcome phenomenon in international affairs.

In the late 1950s, perhaps as a result of the Suez War—a brief but in my view important event which pushed intellectual opinion in Britain and France sharply to the Left—the sloganizing and rhetoric began to change significantly. In London and Paris, the intelligentsia took eagerly to "Peaceful Coexistence," coined in Moscow, and its endless

variations. The Paris Left Bank made its own contribution, with "Third World" (to be followed, in due course, by the still more misleading and dangerous "North-South"). "*Détente*" came in as a respectable replacement for the long-discredited "Appeasement"—itself a potent three syllables in the 1920s and 1930s.

THE SPREAD of such phrases, the highly emotional rationalization from which they sprang and which, in turn, they helped to popularize, was dramatically accelerated by the radicalization of four key newspapers: *Le Monde*, the *Guardian*, the *New York Times*, and the *Washington Post*. This radicalization, which took place historically in the order I have just given, progressively tipped establishment opinion into what was, in essence, a pro-Soviet and anti-Western posture, in the sense that these newspapers tended increasingly to give Soviet good intentions the benefit of the doubt, and per contra characterized those who refused to accept them at (nearly) their face value, as irresponsible and dangerous men.

As a result, the phrase "Cold War," once a neutral and purely descriptive term, assumed a critical, even accusatory, coloration, and those who persisted in saying that it must still be fought became "Cold Warriors," a term of simple abuse. The "word picture" of these four newspapers, the terms in which they posed the arguments and options, and the vernacular in which they described them, were gradually adopted by the TV networks and so became in time the conventional wisdom of the age. That, in crude outline, is how national moods are created, and once in existence it takes a mighty statesman—or more likely a catastrophic series of events, or both—to change them.

THE QUESTION NOW IS whether the Soviet behavior in Afghanistan and elsewhere is sufficiently alarming to dispel the mood of the 1970s for good, or at least for long enough to enable the West to redress the military balance in its favor. As Norman Podhoretz has asked: "Do we have the will to reverse the decline in American power?"

Paul Johnson

in POLICY REVIEW (Washington, D.C.)

Finlandised.” It proves that the military task of restoring the balance cannot be achieved without dealing with the political task of proving at every stage one’s readiness for peaceful solutions. For instance, the NATO decision on the production and eventual deployment of American medium-range missiles in Europe would not have been accepted by the European governments, let alone their peoples, without the simultaneous offer to the Soviets to try and negotiate a “Eurostrategic” balance on a lower level.

As for Eastern Europe, our political task remains to encourage the growth of greater national autonomy within the bloc, and greater internal liberty within the system of Communist Party rule, without explosions. The course of the Polish crisis since last August has shown the tragic risks attending any forward move by the people, but also the chances opened by a combination of firmness of will, realistic understanding of the present limits of change, and national solidarity.

SIGNOR ARRIGO LEVI’S STATEMENT which Labedz criticised as a “rationalisation”—that the Polish events were “a textbook example of what the *Détente* policy of the 1970s was supposed to achieve”—may be an exaggeration: internal change in the Soviet bloc could never be the main purpose of Western policy, nor can such change ever be due to that *alone*. But it has the true core that the increase of all kind of contacts with the West in general, and the removal of the bogey of German revanchism by *Ostpolitik* in particular, created some pre-conditions and removed some obstacles for internal change. Due to the facts of geography, *Ostpolitik* is not as “local” a phenomenon as Labedz suggests—since West Germany happens to be the principal Western neighbour of Eastern Europe. Even the “Sonnenfeldt doctrine” to which Labedz alludes had a core of good sense behind its unfortunate formula of an “organic relationship” between the East European states and the Soviet Union: that for the foreseeable time, all humane progress in those countries depends on avoiding a direct challenge to the Soviet alliance—as both the workers of *Solidarnosc* and the intellectuals of KOR seem to have understood very well.

In short, the political aspect of our effort to restore the East-West Balance must supplement the military part, because the conflict can of its nature never be decided by military means alone, and also because the struggle for the minds of men can only be won by those who are seen not to be relying on military means alone, but are clearly willing and able to subordinate those means to higher human goals. And that is ultimately what “*Détente*” has always been about.

A Rejoinder

By Leopold Labedz

RICHARD LOWENTHAL calls me “an ideological rather than a political thinker.” The implication is that, unlike himself (a hard-headed political analyst), I, a fuzzy ideologist, do not realise that it was “not an idea but a profound emotion which made millions of people temporarily incapable of making distinctions among the various circumstances in which [American] power was used” (such as in Viet Nam).

This entirely misses the point which I made in my article stressing the cyclical character of Western illusions about the Soviet Union. I emphasised that they are rooted in emotions, that the ideas in which they are expressed are mere rationalisations based on wishful thinking, complacency and fear reflecting a tendency to try to escape reality. . . .

Our disagreement is *not* a question of ideology versus politics; and to the extent that it is, I suspect that the shoe is on the other foot. Underneath Lowenthal’s many brilliant analyses of the contemporary scene one can occasionally detect a still lurking ideological residue which vitiates his judgment. I have often wondered where it came from. Heidelberg Marxism of the early ’30s? the “New Beginning” Left enthusiasms of the late ’30s? I do not at all mean to suggest that present views echo old ones. Nor to make any reproach for early illusions. I know very well what a positive role the ex-Communists like Ignazio Silone, Arthur Koestler, Manès Sperber, Boris Souvarine, Bertram Wolfe or Rix Lowenthal have played in our time.

After the War, Lowenthal, by then an eloquent counsellor in the circles of the *SPD*, no longer was a “true believer.” But “the ideological residue” somehow produced a swinging pattern in which a *Besserwisser* turns into a Prodigal Son. This may help us to understand the present shifts in position. The “swinging pattern” has manifested itself repeatedly. Having written after the War (under his old pen-name Paul Sering) a memorable book, *Jenseits des Kapitalismus* (Beyond Capitalism), Richard Lowenthal soon became, like the great *Bürgermeister* of Berlin the social-democratic Ernst Reuter, an influential cold warrior. Still, the “ideological residue” often affected his sharp analytical acumen.

He exaggerated the significance of the Soviet “Cuban missile” defeat, concluding that it had ended the danger of Soviet expansion for decades to come. He entertained some grossly inflated hopes about “Euro-Communism.” He had (initially) been somewhat ambivalent about Rudi Dutschke and his student revolutionaries only to

become later the most embattled fighter for academic freedom against the onslaught of the New Left at the German university campuses. More recently he has embraced *Détente*—only to complain now about “the shattered balance.” Yet he continues to refuse to see the connection between the illusions of *Détente* and the unbalanced predicament in which the West found itself as a result.

NOW HE TRIES to gloss over his own inconsistencies by “discovering” contradictions in others.

“Labeledz claims that the worsening of the Western situation started chiefly with the Kissinger-Nixon *Détente*. But elsewhere he mentions that it was Robert McNamara who, in the early 1960s, stopped the production of strategic nuclear rockets and thus permitted the Soviets to catch up to approximate parity in this field.”

There is no inconsistency here. I described a process in which “cyclical illusions” contributed to the spiral of military and political decline, in which a mistaken political doctrine compounded the errors of a mistaken military doctrine. As a result, the power and the unity of the Western alliance have been eroded. As an example of “cyclical illusions” I mentioned not only McNamara and his MAD “whiz-kids”, but also Yalta (although I was mostly concerned with the *recent* past).

EQUALLY threadbare is his attempt to praise Dr Henry Kissinger for having “made the effort at least to stabilize the relation of strategic forces at approximate parity.”

When Dr Kissinger took office the USA was militarily superior to the Soviet Union in most non-conventional arms—and when he left it this advantage had disappeared. During that time the Soviet Union doubled the number of its missiles, increased their size and throw-weight, and trebled the number of its submarines, while the United States abandoned national military service (“the Draft”) and put its hopes in *Détente* and the SALT agreement—neither has stopped the Soviet military build-up, and both have contributed to the “shattered balance.”

Lowenthal agrees that SALT “decoupled” American and European strategic interests. But he adds that it was not his fault, and not Helmut Schmidt’s, but “the fault of three years of American hesitation in taking up the issue . . .”

It is true that President Jimmy Carter and his predecessors are blameworthy (as I myself pointed

out) and that Chancellor Schmidt realised this. Schmidt expressed it in his 1977 address to the International Institute of Strategic Studies in London:

“Strategic arms limitations confined to the United States and the Soviet Union will inevitably impair the security of the West European members of the Alliance *vis-à-vis* Soviet military superiority in Europe if we do not succeed in removing the disparities of military power in Europe parallel to the SALT negotiations.” (*Survival*, January-February 1978)

But why, knowing that SALT undermines the interest of the Alliance, did not Helmut Schmidt publicly oppose SALT as it stood? One of the most amazing things about the international scene in the 1970s is *how little attention* the Europeans paid to the implications of SALT for their *own situation*. Their leaders solemnly endorsed it at the Guadeloupe summit meeting, raising no public reservations at the time when Jimmy Carter was fighting tooth-and-nail against any Senate amendments to it. Some American observers (like Henry Rowen) were puzzled as to “why Europeans have not been more vocal in perceiving the extent to which SALT undermines their security.”¹ Lothar Ruehl, who is at present a Bonn government press-spokesman, explained at the time that they “kept diplomatically quiet” about their “misgivings on specific terms [of SALT] so as not to make life even more difficult for Mr Carter in his bid to persuade the US Senate to approve the package.”² As it happened, West European support was indeed one of the paramount arguments used in the Senate to



"I Hope He Scares Russia as Much as He Scares Me."

¹ *Washington Quarterly*, Winter 1979.

² *Die Zeit* (Hamburg) 1 June 1979.

achieve ratification of SALT II. The official position of Europeans like Helmut Schmidt had an important—and detrimental—bearing on the European interests at stake, which were disregarded because they were not openly defended by European statesmen.

AT THE RISK OF Richard Lowenthal reproaching me again for being “long on quotations” (including those from myself) I beg to refer to my testimony at the US Senate SALT II Treaty Hearings in July 1979:

“There is a striking discrepancy between public postures and private anxieties in European political circles The official endorsements of SALT II by the NATO leaders are, paradoxical as it may seem, an indication of the undermined European political morale in the face of the growing Soviet threat. The fact that they have meekly accepted the Treaty which separates American and European security interests is an ominous sign . . . a measure of European weakness, not of European political wisdom.”

I do not recollect Richard Lowenthal expressing such thoughts and anxieties at the time; quite the contrary. Whose fault was this? Helmut Schmidt's? Politicians are known for “fudging and mudging”, but “non-ideological” analysts are supposed to clarify the issues.

POLITICAL CONFUSION has its “shattering” consequences. Chancellor Schmidt is discovering that the policy which Lowenthal recommended as a model for the West—combining *Ostpolitik* (or *Détente*) with a simultaneous effort to maintain a safe military balance—is already in trouble. In the United States *Détente* undermined the military effort; in West Germany *Ostpolitik* is now beginning to have a similar effect. The Chancellor could not fulfil the pledge of a 3% rise in military expenditure, and faces a challenge from left-wing SPD deputies who demand cuts in the defence budget. Chancellor Schmidt has prevailed, but it is clear that he is on the horns of a dilemma which is becoming painful.

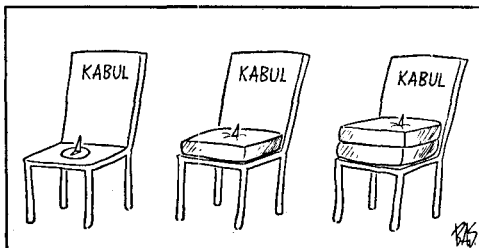
Altogether it is a regional confirmation of the

unfortunate Western experience with *Détente* which has shown that its anaesthetising political effects preclude an adequate military effort. In the USA, however, the failure of *Détente* produced a popular reaction which one hopes will provide the basis for more sober policies. In Germany, *Ostpolitik* contributed to the rise of neutralism. “Living in Germany as I do”, says Richard Lowenthal, he can assure all and sundry that my reference to a recent opinion-survey result which indicates that “over 40% of the West Germans have become neutralist-minded” is “absolute nonsense.” He must have been abroad when the results of this poll were published in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and in *Die Welt* (10 August 1980). It was conducted by one of the most prestigious German public opinion institutes—EMNID—and it revealed that while the majority of Germans (52%) still favours the Western alliance, an astonishingly large minority (43%) has come to favour a neutralistic policy between the two super-powers.

Nor can one disregard numerous other indications of a rising tide of German neutralist feeling. One quarter of the SPD deputies in the *Bundestag* are sympathetic to it. The parliamentary foreign-policy spokesman of the SPD, Karsten Voigt, is a leader of his party's left wing and former chief of the militant *Jusos*. The Wehner-Bahr tendency is stronger than ever in the SPD. While promoting *Ostpolitik*, Chancellor Schmidt is a loyal supporter of the Atlantic alliance; but it is going to be increasingly difficult for him to run the two horses together. Even *Die Zeit*, usually so close to the Chancellor, criticised him on the issue of increases in defence expenditure. To recommend this already troubled policy, which clearly stems from weakness, as an example to be followed by the United States—and to hope that this would effectively restore the “shattered balance”—is indeed “absolute nonsense.”

Only the abandonment of the illusions of *Détente* and the strengthening of a new American policy can prevent Schmidt from losing his own balance, and indeed avoid the sliding of Germany into a quagmire of neutralism. There was little German confidence in American resolve. The alibi which Helmut Schmidt provided for Jimmy Carter on SALT II had a deleterious effect. Why is Richard Lowenthal so keen on perpetuating the errors which have undermined the East-West balance? How can he want us to believe that policies rooted in them will now restore it? Such touching faith belongs to the realm of miracles.

“We disagree radically on the reasons for the deterioration”, he states, “but only very partly on what is needed to restore the balance now.” I am not at all sure that his remaining illusions would not result in policies which would effectively prevent such a desirable outcome. However, I am glad



that he agrees with me on so many points. My suggested remedies, I submit, followed on directly from my diagnosis of the malaise. I am therefore somewhat puzzled as to how we could disagree so radically on the diagnosis and agree fairly well on the therapy. There is some incongruity here. A new beginning cannot be made within the old rickety framework.

LOWENTHAL AGREES about the need for increased military expenditure "both in the United States and in Western Europe"; agrees that the effort should not be guided by the "numbers game"; agrees that "strategic" and "theatre" weapons must be "recoupled" in any future negotiations, and that they should be fixed "on a level restoring effective balance." He is as sceptical as I about the general "Code of Conduct" allegedly binding both super-powers. He says that he also believes in "the inevitability of reintroducing the draft in the United

States" (I only believe in its desirability). He agrees that "the neglected role of COCOM should be strengthened"; agrees that "the West should above all concentrate on developing alternative resources [of energy]"; and "cordially agrees" that "restoring the balance can never be a purely military task, but has a necessary political component."

For some incomprehensible reason he attributes to me the absurd proposition that it is simply a question of political propaganda, a view which is utterly foreign to me and which I have never expressed. But I did express repeatedly during the whole of the 1970s all the above desiderata, "shouting them from the rooftops", stressing them again and again in articles, speeches and testimony. It is a pity that my old friend Richard Lowenthal did not use his powerful intellect (of which his thoughtful article on "What Has Happened to the 'Revolution' in Our Times" in the February-March issue of ENCOUNTER is a vivid illustration), and his eloquent and persuasive pen, to propagate them earlier.

Loveless, His Silent Speech

(George Loveless of Tolpuddle, Dorset, in Van Diemen's Land, 1835)

Dear, distant wife,
for most of us now truthful and sociable
words come less easily, less often.
Scrapings from stone lips.

My tongue: this flat lump
shrivels in its dark, exhausted groin,
but the thinking I cannot stop.
Whatever happens to all those thoughts
that never reach the hard shaping
of words?

They decompose;
but something is left
swinging madly round my skull
with a deaf-mute's scream.
Writing helps, but I need a world
which hears, not one dear pair of eyes
out of sight.

The malign trickery of Word:
one small letter and it becomes
a world or a sword,
but not mine, not ours,
only theirs who hold the power
that the *right* words bring,

who hold conversations
instead of talking,
who can let out their thoughts
on long free reins: the law
of the civil tongue.

I once put words together with my friends,
hopefully, solemnly,
in a private room:
their echo was still dying
as the prison door slammed.

So, in the beginning was the word.
Now what grim rattle will clot
the last silence of a people
without a tongue?

Preserve these words, my dear,
and say them aloud to yourself,
listening to each syllable
as you let it go, breaking
its fragility on their air.
Repeat my love aloud
in my own imperfect country
that I may hear it saved.

Rodney Pybus

LETTERS

Chalfont, E. P. Thompson, & the Bomb

LORD CHALFONT'S ARGUMENT against the move to give up nuclear weapons is eminently reasonable. But it disregards two important factors.

One is that, although we may think we may save something of ourselves by using nuclear bombs, as a species we defeat ourselves by condemning later generations (to say nothing of other species) to suffering and death from both initial genetic damage and exposure to residual radiation.

The other is that, rationally or irrationally, popular resistance may indeed override and supersede such apparently prudential considerations as the noble lord adduces. If it does, such resourceful advisers should be able to cope with the resultant problem of security and balance of power.

JOHN PARKE

London

LORD CHALFONT, in his lucid restatement of the case for nuclear weapons [ENCOUNTER, January], makes a number of points with which most of us would agree. May I take up a few that are more controversial?

1. *Civil Defence.* Lord Chalfont contends that whether we keep nuclear weapons or not "an effective system of home defence is morally imperative." But what defence, for a country so crowded as ours, would be effective against weapons more than a hundred times as powerful as the bomb dropped on Hiroshima? The unilateralist position is not, I think, that civil defence is provocative—a view Lord Chalfont rightly waves aside—but that it constitutes, for the United Kingdom, an act of wilful self-deception. This is doubly dangerous. First, because it encourages people to forget the appalling risks built into our policy of deterrence; second, because it allows the Cabinet (witness various remarks by Mr Pym and Mr Whitelaw in the last twelve months) to assume that, having done what little it can for the electorate, the government can go on to endorse whatever actions the United States conceives to be essential to Western interests.

2. *Cruise Missiles.* Lord Chalfont reminds us that if these are installed in Europe an Allied response short of strategic retaliation will be available to the American President. This may, though he thinks it should not, reassure some Americans. Why it should appeal, as he claims, to "many Europeans" he does not explain. Surely the whole Cruise missile programme will increase the danger of a limited nuclear war: limited, that is, to the European theatre, yet entailing unimaginable suffering and destruction?

3. *Britain as a Target for Attack.* Lord Chalfont observes that the British nuclear force, being largely

submarine-based offers no incentive for a pre-emptive strike at the United Kingdom. This is true. But unilateralism clearly requires the removal of American bases and the dismantling of all nuclear weapons stored in this country. To dismiss the view that this would reduce the likelihood of Britain being a target in any nuclear war as "a cosy assumption" seems a little odd.

4. *The Moral Argument.* This is the heart of the unilateralist case, and Lord Chalfont does his best to meet it. He makes two points. First, he argues, it is difficult to distinguish between the use of nuclear weapons and high-explosive and incendiary attacks of the kind that destroyed Coventry, Dresden, and Hamburg. He does not, unfortunately, seem to see what follows: which is not that both are equally moral, but that both, being acts of indiscriminate massacre, are equally immoral. The justification, if that is the word, for Dresden, as for Coventry and Hiroshima, was presumably that what is expedient is right ("Success", said Lenin, "is the only test of morality.") Those who hold this view—Lord Chalfont evidently has misgivings about it—might find it helpful to read a review in the *Times Literary Supplement* (26 December 1980) of Martin Middlebrook's recent analysis of the Hamburg raids.

LORD CHALFONT THEN goes on to his second point: that whatever we think of the use of nuclear weapons, the *threat* to use them, in defence, is another matter. He offers a simple everyday analogy: the distinction we should all want to make between "the man who threatens violence in defence of his own person or property and the man who does so in the commission of robbery or rape." Perhaps we could take this analogy a little further. What should we say of a man who threatens that, if physically assaulted, he will burn his assailant's wife and children to death? Analogies, to be sure, can be misleading; most analogies are. But this would seem to come closer than Lord Chalfont's to the stance of a NATO ready to use nuclear weapons even to meet a conventional attack.

Whether a threat can itself be immoral is not, however, the point. What is certain is that the deterrent will only deter if we are prepared to use it. Lord Chalfont recommends the retention of *Polaris*. The 32 missiles carried by any two of these submarines would kill, and are intended to kill, some twenty million people, more than half of them women and children who would certainly not have been consulted about the acts of state which might have "justified" this retaliation.

THAT WE HAVE LIVED with this fact for ten or twelve years suggests that our capacity for self-deception may be greater even than the Home Office supposes. Lord Chalfont is right, on the other hand, to argue that the difficulties of thinking out an alternative defence strategy are formidable. The contention of unilateralists is not that they have a solution to the problem. It is simply that the present government's policy is dangerous and unacceptable, and that an alternative to it will have to start from a rejection of the assumptions of the last thirty years.

R. W. GASKELL

University of Bristol

MR PARKE'S LETTER perpetuates the central fallacy of the unilateralist case. Of course the use of nuclear weapons would be a terrible event. The whole point of a deterrent strategy is to prevent their use, and also to prevent other people from imposing their will upon us by threatening to use them.

Mr Gaskell's letter raises some interesting and important points. Unfortunately there is not space to deal with them all fully. I would like, however, to make, as briefly as possible, a few comments.

Civil Defence is not an act of wilful self-deception. It is an integral part of a deterrent posture. No potential enemy is likely to believe that nuclear weapons will be used unless there is an obvious attempt to defend our own civilian population against the inevitable retaliation. I respect Mr Gaskell's arguments about the morality of nuclear deterrence although I do not entirely accept them. My major quarrel with his point of view is that it would be, in my view, extremely dangerous to reject the present defence policy of the West (including its reliance upon nuclear deterrence) without *first* formulating an alternative strategy. As Mr Gaskell rightly says, the problems are complicated and formidable. They will not be solved by the methods of popular protest.

ALUN CHALFONT

House of Lords
London

Final Victory

IN YOUR ISSUE of February—March 1981 Mr David Botsford counters my suggestion that it is paranoid to believe that the Russians wish to conquer the world, by quoting the familiar statement from *Pravda* that "the struggle will continue... until the complete and final victory of communism on a world scale."

To equate the global victory of "communism" with Russian world conquest may not be paranoid. But it is extraordinarily ignorant.

MICHAEL HOWARD

Oxford University

Scott & Amundsen

WITH REGARD to Wayland Young's excellent article [ENCOUNTER, May] on Roland Huntford's treatment of Captain Scott in *Scott & Amundsen*, I think the reason for Mr Huntford's attitude to Scott quite clearly stems not from what Scott himself meaningfully did, but from what occurred in the wave of sentiment that swept the world when it was known of the manner of his death and that of his brave companions.

Mr Huntford is an admirer of Roald Amundsen and few things can annoy such an admirer more than the eclipse of his hero. After attaining the victory at the South Pole and thus apparently assured of great renown throughout the world (indeed enjoying that renown for about a year before the news of Scott was generally known), Amundsen suddenly found himself dropped to earth by the great tragedy of his rival; and not only that but held in some way responsible in that if he had not forced the issue there might have not been such a dire

necessity for Scott to actually achieve the Pole. That, in a nutshell, is the cause of so many unpleasant undertones about Scott in Huntford's book.

One hopes that in any future publications on a polar theme Mr Huntford will not see fit to continue his vendetta and thus visibly weaken his chances of being regarded as a serious biographer. Perhaps he should listen to a word or two from Amundsen himself:

"Scott was a splendid man, and nobody could hold a higher admiration than myself for his courage. . . . But just as in times of war while the soldiers of opposing armies often have a high regard for their foes in uniform and the non-combatants at home feel obliged to indulge in hymns of hate, so in exploration whereas the men in the field usually hold their competitors in high esteem the stay-at-homes frequently feel obliged to belittle the success of an explorer if he is not of their own nationality."

SALLY WALDRON

Torquay
Devon

"Therapy & Facts"

THERE MAY WELL HAVE BEEN eleven "therapeutic trials" of real-versus-simulated *ECT*, (George Mendelson, Letters, ENCOUNTER, February—March), but I have been unable to track down more than about half that number of the sort of *controlled double blind* therapeutic trials, subjected to careful statistical analysis, which were at the heart of my original article, "The Illness of a Therapy", ENCOUNTER, July 1980. It is perhaps unfortunate for Dr Mendelson that I had advance information about the results of the most recent Medical Research Council trial which was only published in *The Lancet* at the end of December 1980.

This confirms earlier findings that many patients with severe depression who would have been thought good candidates for *ECT* recovered quickly after simulated *ECT*. The modest advantage for real *ECT* in one group of patients was short-lived and there was no difference between patients who had real or simulated *ECT* at one month and six months after the end of treatment. Furthermore, the experienced psychiatrists carrying out the assessment were unable to guess with more than random accuracy to which group the patients belonged. Readers can draw their own conclusions about why Dr Mendelson cites as "the" current view on the efficacy of *ECT* what is no more than a current view.

As to Fenichel's 1930 "survey of therapeutic results", this too was hardly a controlled trial and was just another instance of enthusiasts reporting their results enthusiastically. I really don't know why he thinks it worth mentioning.

COLIN BREWER

London

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Johannes Gross is the author of the best-selling *Unserer letzten Jahre*, published by Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt.

U. A. Fanthorpe recently won third prize in the Arvon Foundation's poetry competition. A volume of her poems, *Side Effects*, is published by Peterloo Poets.

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Sir James Richards was Editor of *Architectural Review* from 1937–71 and was for many years Architectural Correspondent of *The Times*. He has advised on many aspects of architecture, fine arts, industrial design, and contemporary arts, and was awarded the bicentenary medal of The Royal Society of Architects in 1971. His publications include *Introduction to Modern Architecture* (1940, n.e. 1970), *Who's Who in Architecture from 1400 to the Present Day* (Weidenfeld, 1977), *Eight Hundred Years of Finnish Architecture* (David & Charles, 1978), and *Memoirs of an Unjust Fella* (Weidenfeld, 1980).

Marina Warner is a historian, biographer and novelist. Among her books are *Alone of All Her Sex: The Cult of the Virgin Mary* (Weidenfeld, 1976; Quartet Books, 1978), *The Crack in the Teacup: Britain in the Twentieth Century* (Deutsch, 1979), *Queen Victoria's Sketchbook* (Macmillan, London, 1979). Her study of Joan of Arc, *The Image of Female Heroism*, will be published this summer by Weidenfeld.

Anthony Sampson, Contributing Editor to *Newsweek*, was Editorial Consultant to the Brandt Commission, and edited their report, *North-South: A New Deal* (M.I.T. Press, Pan, 1980). His books include *The New Europeans* (1968), *The New Anatomy of Britain* (1971), *The Sovereign State: The Secret History of ITT* (Hodder, 1973), a study of great oil companies, *The Seven Sisters* (1975), and *The Arms Bazaar* (1977).

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Richard Lowenthal was foreign policy leader-writer for *The Observer* during the 1950s and then, until his retirement in 1978, Professor of International Relations at the Free University in West Berlin. Among his books are *World Communism* (1964), and *Model or Ally? Communist Powers and the Developing Countries* (Oxford University Press, 1977).

Leopold Labedz is Editor of *Survey* magazine in London, and editor of *Solzhenitsyn: A Documentary Record* (n.e. Penguin Books, 1972). His articles in *ENCOUNTER* include "Play It Again, Uncle Sam" (January 1980), and "Of Myths and Horrors" (March 1980).

Life & Letters Today



GOBBLEDYGOOK: Wastebins are being sent to Britain's 1980 gobbledygook champions—who prefer to use a dozen words when three will do.

Yesterday the Plain English Campaign revealed some of the mind-boggling efforts of the 100 booby-prize winners, among them the BBC, the Adult Literacy and Basic Skill

Unit and the Environment Department.

Salford Council came up with these two classics:

"If there is no insulation in your loft you should ticked the box marked yes and Erratum: Page 19: Shopping Facilities. For the justification statement read the implementation note and vice versa."

The Environment Department is criticised for its claim form for tenants who want to buy their council homes. The 8-page document, with 10 pages of notes, including the question:

"Does the tenant named above, or where more than one tenant is named above at least one of them, occupy the house of flat as his or her only or principal home? Yes/No."

DAILY MAIL

London

POLIT-ARIAS: I have just received [Sir Robin Hooper writes] the English National Opera's latest bulletin heralding the performance of

"Puccini's tragic tale of the Japanese child-bride and the effects of American imperialism".

While applauding this evidence of social awareness in St Martin's Lane, may I ask for your support in pleading for early productions of that other tragic tale by Puccini which lifts the veil on Rachmanism, the exploitation of juvenile female labour, and the economic pressures on progressive intellectuals under the July Monarchy in France—Verdi's magnificent tribute to the struggle of the metal-workers in feudal Spain—and Mozart's fearless indictment of the corrupt and sexist society of Bourbon Naples?

THE TIMES

New Hampshire

JACOBINISM COMPUTERISED: Computer simulations are turning college students and faculties on to computer teaching. Medical students are using computers to work on imaginary infants who are dying; law students are prosecuting murderers; and history students are being transported by computer into the turmoil of the French Revolution.

Computer instruction isn't new. But until recently, it has been confined largely to routine exercises in maths, sciences, and languages. Now better technology, particularly the microcomputer, is spurring a new generation of sophisticated and innovative classroom exercises that imitate real situations.

Some Dartmouth College students have lost their heads over one exercise. Through a computer terminal that prints questions on paper, a student is quizzed about the French Revolution. Suddenly, with bells ringing, the computer declares that the student stands before a revolutionary tribunal, and that based on the "evidence"—quiz answers which, unknown to the student, were biased toward one revolutionary faction or another—the Tribunal "has found you guilty and has sentenced you to be guillotined within 24 hours."

The simulation teaches students about the "revisionary quality" of the revolution, says its author, Michael Carter. "People generally don't know what the game is about until they've gotten their head cut off for the first time," he says.

WALL STREET JOURNAL

London

TROUBLED MEN: We may be "born unto trouble", but we will have to learn to live with it.

In 1801 Wilberforce said: "I dare not marry, the future is so unsettled."

In 1806 William Pitt said: "There is scarcely anything around us but ruin and despair."

In 1849 Disraeli said: "In industry, commerce and agriculture there is no hope."

In 1852 the dying Duke of Wellington said: "I thank God I shall be spared from seeing the consummation of ruin that is gathering about us."

So take heart and kid yourself that "the best is yet to be" (Browning).

DAILY TELEGRAPH

London

ABSINTHE FRIENDS: "Banned in France since 1914," I wrote a couple of weeks ago about absinthe (in the article on the blameless apertif, Ricard). I have read since then [Cyril Ray writes] that the French government's ban on the production of absinthe came into effect in March 1915 but, however that may be, there is a most circumstantially detailed account by Warner Allen, then Paris correspondent of the *Morning Post*, of how at six in the evening of 4 August 1914 (the day after Germany declared war on France) at the Café Napolitain, his friend Georges Duval, "with an empty glass in his hand and an expression of puzzled horror on his face", exclaimed, "The Star called Wormwood has fallen."

Rather an extravagant way of announcing that the waiter had refused him the glass of absinthe he had been accustomed to take at the same time and the same place for 40 years, but then Duval was a translator of Shakespeare into alexandrines, and engaged at the time on the Book of Revelation.

PUNCH



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